

Sierra Leone: Transition to Peace

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On May 14, 2002, Sierra Leoneans voted in the first national elections to be held since 1996, following an extensive, United Nations (U.N.)-assisted poll preparation process. The election followed the successful completion of a U.N.-sponsored national disarmament process in January 2002, when government, U.N., and RUF officials formally declared an end to Sierra Leone's decade-old conflict. Initial poll results indicated that President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, the incumbent, would win the election, but he reportedly garnered less than 20 % of the military vote. A special court of mixed international and national legal jurisdiction is being created to try those held most responsible for war crimes and human rights abuses committed during the conflict. It is expected to try former RUF leader Foday Sankoh.

Beginning in 1991, successive governments of Sierra Leone, a small West African country with significant mineral resources but a poorly developed economy, were besieged by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a guerrilla group-cum-political party that claims a radical-populist political agenda. The conflict originated, in part, from the growth of systemic government corruption in the decades after independence in 1961, leading to a severe deterioration of state governing capacity. It was also driven by contention over the control of state and natural resources, particularly diamonds. Regional insecurity and external interference in the conflict – notably by the Liberian government, with which the RUF reportedly traded diamonds for arms and other assistance – also contributed to its persistence. During the war, the RUF and other factions forcibly recruited children as fighters and used extreme violence against civilians, in some cases to control diamond resources.

The end of the conflict resulted from the revitalization of the 1999 Lomé Peace Accord, which had broken down. RUF leadership changes and a cease-fire agreement in 2000 were followed by conflict resolution meetings between government, RUF, and U.N. officials. A renewed program of disarmament and reintegration resulted, and implementation of portions of the 1999 Lomé Peace Accords resumed. The accords, negotiated with the active support of the Clinton Administration, were signed in July 1999 in Lomé, Togo. Their viability was called into doubt soon after the signing. Severe human rights abuses and other accord violations by the RUF and other factions mounted, culminating, during the first half of 2000, in hostage taking and armed attacks on U.N. peacekeepers. The U.N. Peacekeeping Operation in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was established by the U.N. Security Council in late 1999. Its size, the strength of its mandate, and the duration and focus of its mission have been augmented several times. It was recently tasked with providing electoral support.

The United States has funded the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Sierra Leone since the start of the conflict. In the mid- to late-1990s, it funded security assistance in support of the elected government of Sierra Leone. U.S. policy has emphasized political support for conflict resolution mediation, continued U.N. multi-sectoral assistance to the government and people of Sierra Leone, and the imposition of U.N. trade, travel, and other sanctions on the RUF and its domestic and international allies, particularly the Liberian government.

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Sierra Leone: Transition to Peace

Recent Developments

On May 14, 2002, Sierra Leoneans voted in the first national elections to be held since 1996, following an extensive, United Nations (U.N.)-assisted poll preparation process. Election campaigning was largely peaceful, although a clash between opposing party supporters, involving rock throwing and destruction of party property, was reported. The election followed the reportedly successful completion of a U.N.-sponsored national disarmament effort in January 2002, when government and U.N. officials and leaders of the former rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), formally declared an end to Sierra Leone's decade-old conflict. Initial poll results indicated that President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, the incumbent, would win the election by a large margin, but they also showed him garnering less than 20 % of the military vote. The RUF Party (RUF, the RUF's political wing) was barred from nominating as its presidential candidate its declared leader, Foday Sankoh; he is jailed and under indictment for murder. The RUF instead nominated its General Secretary, Pallo Bangura.

Figure 1. Sierra Leone



The peace process that led to the end of the war began with RUF leadership changes in August 2000 and a November 2000 cease-fire agreement. In December 2001, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) began to assist repatriated refugees to return to their homes in areas declared safe by the government. Previously, the UNHCR had helped refugees repatriate to Sierra Leone and had grouped them in designated safe areas but had not resettled them in their original home villages, which were often still in insecure areas. In January 2002, the Sierra Leone government and the U.N. finalized arrangements to create a special war crimes tribunal of mixed international and national legal jurisdiction to try those held most responsible for human rights abuses and other crimes of war. An associated Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) will also hear cases of conflict-related violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in order to create a historical record of such violations; address a history of impunity for human rights offenders; promote healing and reconciliation; and prevent a repetition of such acts.

Background

From 1991 until 2000, successive governments of Sierra Leone, a small West African country with significant mineral resources but a poorly developed economy, were besieged by a rebel group, the RUF.¹ The conflict originated, in part, from the growth of systemic government corruption, beginning in the late 1960s. By the late 1980s, the capacity of the state to govern and to provide basic public goods and services had severely deteriorated, resulting in the effective disenfranchisement and impoverishment of large segments of the population. In addition, a history of political thuggery – in particular, a local rebellion following extensive violence surrounding local elections in 1982 – set a precedent for armed political conflict in Sierra Leone. Armed hostilities were also driven by contention over the control of mineral wealth – especially diamonds – and state resources. The Sierra Leone war was also perpetuated by armed conflicts in neighboring states and interference in Sierra Leone by parties to these conflicts, particularly by former Liberian civil war faction leader Charles Taylor, who in 1997 was elected President of Liberia.

During the conflict the RUF, using guerrilla warfare tactics, avoided defeat by pro-government forces comprised of the Sierra Leone Army (SLA); ECOMOG, the Monitoring Group of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a regional peacekeeping force; and local militias, now organized as the Civilian Defense Forces (CDFs). In 1999 and 2000, the RUF also initiated hostilities against U.N. peacekeeping and monitoring personnel and British soldiers retraining the SLA. The configuration of the sides in the conflict shifted periodically. Relations between SLA units and the RUF, ranging from mutual non-interference to trading and outright collaboration, were reported, leading to the coining of the term “sobel,” i.e., “soldier-rebel.” Access to economic resources was a the primary motivation for such ties.

The RUF

The RUF, which has formally transformed itself into a conventional political party called the RUF, is infamous for having used violent terror tactics to control the population. It forcibly recruited children as fighters and systemically raped, mutilated, and murdered civilians perceived to be sympathetic to the government. The chopping off of civilians’ limbs and the scarification and drugging of forced recruits were hallmarks of such violence. Other factions occasionally used similar tactics. The military strength of the RUF fighting force, now largely demobilized, was difficult to determine during the conflict; estimates of its size fluctuated. Various estimates described a core force of 5,000 to 7,000 – or more – experienced, trained fighters. At certain periods during the war, as many as 28,000 personnel, reportedly including forced laborers, mercenaries, and SLA deserters, were believed to have

¹This report is based on news accounts; documents of the United Nations, the United States, and other national governments; and studies by academic, research, and private voluntary organizations. Also, Sierra Leone Web [<http://www.Sierra-Leone.org>], run by former Sierra Leone Peace Corps Volunteer Peter Andersen, presents a daily news digest of Sierra Leonean news, and archives many key documents. In this report, sources of unique facts, accounts, and direct quotations are cited; where multiple sources report similar facts or events, no citation is generally given.

comprised the RUF. In mid-May 2001, the RUF stated that it had a total of 10,000 combatants under arms throughout the country. In early January 2002, following disarmament, the U.N. reported that 16,620 RUF fighters had been demobilized. Some observers believe that not all RUF members have disarmed. Some elements of the group have reportedly crossed into Liberia to cache arms and assist the forces of Liberian President Charles Taylor to counter a burgeoning armed insurgency by opponents of his regime.

RUF-Liberia Ties. The origin and operational capacity of the RUF have been closely tied to the politics of Liberia. At its inception and throughout the 1990s, the RUF was led by Foday Saybana Sankoh, a former photographer and cashiered Sierra Leone Army (SLA) corporal who had been imprisoned for participating in a coup against the Sierra Leone government in 1971. Sankoh and Taylor are both reported to have received military training in Libya in the late 1980s. Sankoh and his associates are said to have assisted Taylor's armed civil war faction, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) at the start of its insurgency. In early 1991, Sankoh and a small cadre of Sierra Leonean dissidents and economic refugees who supported him were reportedly supplied by Taylor with arms and a small force of Burkinabe mercenaries and Liberian fighters. The group then launched incursions into Sierra Leone's border areas. Taylor is alleged to have supported the RUF for several related reasons:

- To counter a threat to the NPFL posed by the backing of the Sierra Leonean government, then led by Joseph Momoh, for a rival Liberian rebel faction called ULIMO, which was comprised of Liberian ethnic Krahn and Mandingo refugees who had fled NPFL attacks. It initially operated out of Sierra Leonean territory;
- To retaliate against the Momoh government's support for ECOMOG, the Monitoring Group of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a regional military force that had intervened to halt the Liberian conflict; and
- Because the RUF's destabilization of eastern Sierra Leone allowed the NPFL to gain control of commerce in the diamond-rich border region.

Taylor is also believed to have held a personal grudge against the Momoh government, which reportedly jailed him in the late 1980s and later refused to allow Liberian exiled dissidents associated with Taylor to operate out of Sierra Leone.

Close ties between Taylor and the RUF continued after the end of the Liberian civil war and Taylor's 1997 election as President of Liberia. The RUF acted as a source of funds and regional control for Taylor. The RUF reportedly obtained arms, logistical support, and supplies from Liberia by trading illegally-mined Sierra Leonean diamonds with the Taylor government.² Taylor's critics, including the U.S.

² See, among other sources, CRS Report RL30751, *Diamonds and Conflict: Policy Proposals and Background*; CRS Report RL30933, *Liberia: Country Background and U.S. Policy*; United Nations, *Report of the Panel of Experts Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1343 (2001), Paragraph 19, Concerning Liberia*, S/2001/1015, October 26, (continued...)

government, repeatedly denounced such ties. They also charged that the Liberian government continued to trade in Sierra Leonean diamonds following the imposition of U.N. sanctions banning such trade.

A U.N. sanctions monitoring panel reported in late 2000 that it had found “unequivocal and overwhelming evidence that Liberia has been supporting the RUF at all levels, in providing training, weapons and related materiel, logistical support, a staging ground for attacks, and a safe haven for retreat and cooperation.”³ The panel also described patterns of trade in diamonds between the RUF and Liberia and documented the shipment of weapons to the rebels through Liberia and other countries in the region. It described evidence establishing that the RUF had been trained alongside Liberian security forces and asserted that arms for the RUF had passed through other countries in the region. Subsequent sanctions panels have continued to document Liberian government sanctions violations, most recently in April 2002, although they have also reported a sharp decrease in the Liberian-Sierra Leonean diamond trade in late 2001 and early 2002.

Liberia is currently under U.N. Security Council sanctions as a result of its support for the RUF.⁴ The sanctions demand that the Liberian government:

- Cease its financial and military support for the RUF in Sierra Leone, and for other armed rebel groups in the region;
- Expel all RUF members and prohibit all RUF activities in Liberia;
- Freeze all financial resources in Liberia that benefit the RUF;
- Cease all imports of Sierra Leonean rough diamonds not controlled through the Sierra Leone government’s Certificate of Origin export control system;
- Ground all Liberian aircraft until the Liberian government is able to update and verify the ownership and registration status of all aircraft in its national territory.

The resolutions also prohibit the import of all rough diamonds from Liberia, whether or not such diamonds originate in Liberia; prohibit travel to or through any U.N. member state of senior members of the Liberian government, or of their families or associates; and prohibit the international sale or supply to Liberia of arms and related materiel of all types, and the provision of technical training related to the provision, manufacture, or maintenance of such materiel. The United States has

²(...continued)

2001, and the panels’s prior report (S/2000/1195, December 20, 2000); United Nations, “Sierra Leone parties still mining diamonds illegally, Security Council says,” UN News, December 13, 2001; Douglas Farah, “Al Qaeda Cash Tied to Diamond Trade,” Washington Post, November 2, 2001, A1; “S. Leone Rebels Said Bypassing ‘Blood Diamond’ Ban,” Reuters, March 28, 2001; and Norimitsu Onishi. “Africa Diamond Hub Defies Smuggling Rules,” *New York Times*, January 2, 2001.

³U.N., “Report by the Panel of Experts appointed pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1306 (2000), Paragraph 19, in Relation to Sierra Leone,” S/2000/1195, December 2000.

⁴See U.N. Security Council resolutions S/RES/1408, May 6, 2002; S/RES/1395, February 27, 2002; and S/RES/1343, March 7, 2001.

supported the U.N. sanctions regime by implementing unilateral sanctions against Taylor.

International criticism and pressure on Taylor to end all ties with the RUF have persisted, despite vigorous and repeated assertions by President Taylor and Liberian diplomats that they have not traded in diamonds and no longer support the RUF. Liberian government comments on the RUF have been nuanced and opaque. In late 2001, for instance, Liberian Foreign Minister Monie Captan, said a 2001 U.N. sanctions monitoring report was based on “misinformation” and “half truths.” In January 2001, Mr. Taylor stated that the Liberian government

has never denied our knowledge of RUF. However, we have always rejected and continue to reject any claims that this contact is commercial or economic in nature. Quite to the contrary, our relationship with RUF and our corresponding security concerns are... an expected response to successive Sierra Leonean Governments’ active support and arming of Liberian dissident groups resident in Sierra Leone... [who] have stated and demonstrated that their objective is to overthrow the Liberian Government by force of arms.⁵

The RUF-Taylor relationship appears increasingly to have become one based on economic exchange, rather than a political allegiance, although Taylor appears to have closer ties with some RUF elements than others. News accounts indicate that in late 2000 and in 2001, RUF fighters entered northern Liberia and southern Guinea, which the Liberian government has for several years accused of sponsoring various anti-Taylor rebel groups, to assist Liberia in countering an armed opposition group. The group, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), seeks to overthrow Taylor. A number of RUF fighters are reported to be supporting Taylor’s efforts in return for promises of compensation, possibly including opportunities to loot – an economic activity that has been associated with conflict in the Mano River region throughout the 1990s.

Foday Sankoh. Until August 2000, when the RUF elected Issa Sesay as an interim leader, the RUF was headed by Sankoh. Sankoh was sentenced to death for treason in 1998 in Sierra Leone, after being repatriated from Nigeria, where he had been placed under arrest by Nigerian authorities while visiting. The sentence was later commuted under a 1999 peace deal.

He was taken into Sierra Leonean government custody after a May 2000 public demonstration in Freetown against RUF atrocities, which Sankoh’s bodyguards fired upon, killing 21. In the fracas that followed, Sankoh hid within his compound but was apprehended a week later by members of the public and handed over to the SLA. Sankoh was detained by the Sierra Leone government under the wartime state of emergency that prevailed until March 1, 2002, when it was lifted to allow for elections to take place. On March 4, he was formally charged by the government with 70 criminal offenses, including murder, along with 49 other RUF members. The action allowed the government to continue to legally detain him. Sankoh has declared that he is innocent of the charges, although he has not formally entered a plea. His

⁵U.N., “Letter dated 24 January 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Liberia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General,” S/2001/78, January 24, 2001.

trial was reportedly adjourned because the government could find a lawyer to represent him. In addition to the March 4 charges, Sankoh is expected to be tried for wartime human rights abuses by the Special Court for Sierra Leone (see below). International officials familiar with the Sierra Leone crisis have declared Sankoh a discredited figure in the peace process, and the government has declared him ineligible to run as a presidential candidate.

RUF Political Agenda. The RUF's political agenda reflects a loose set of radical-populist ideas and purports to provide a means for empowering the disenfranchised in a historical context of state corruption and violence. It was rarely articulated in much detail during most of the 1990s.⁶ Its public political statements consisted primarily of condemnations of the government, anti-British statements, and warnings to the population that they should not support the government. Its message, as illustrated prior to the 1996 elections and during the 1997 and 1999 invasions of Freetown, was clear: voting or otherwise supporting the government could result in severe physical punishment, including mutilation or death. The RUF's unclear political agenda, together with persistent RUF attacks on civilians and the group's systematic violation of multiple peace accords, caused many analysts to dismiss the group as essentially a criminal element motivated primarily by the desire to control diamonds and other resources.

In early 2000, the group published an Internet web site in apparent anticipation of its planned transformation into a political party, the RUF Party (RUFPP), as per the Lomé Peace Accord (see below)⁷. The site calls for an end to oppression, corruption, and social injustice, and "radical social transformation" leading to free education, medical care, and self sufficiency; and "arms ... power ... and wealth to the people." Recent RUFPP activities have focused on secure funding and office facilities for its political party activities prior to May elections. Nigeria has also reportedly sponsored the training of party organizers. The RUF/RUFPP has frequently leveled accusations against the government charging, for instance, that it is subservient to British government and business interests, and has focused much attention on its bid to seek the freedom of Sankoh.

Late 1990s: Developments in the Sierra Leone Conflict

AFRC/RUF Junta, ECOMOG, and UNOMSIL

In late May 1997, a military coup calling itself the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), led by Major Johnny Paul Koroma, ousted the Kabbah government, elected in March 1996 elections during the country's first multiparty national election

⁶The movement's early organizers were reportedly influenced by *The Green Book* of Libya's Muammar al-Qadhafi. The RUF produced a 1995 manifesto called *Footpaths to Democracy: Toward a New Sierra Leone*. See the Sierra Leone Web site on the Internet at [<http://www.sierra-leone.org/footpaths.html>].

⁷See [<http://www.rufp.org/>].

in over a decade. The action derailed a November 1996 peace agreement, the Abidjan Accord. The AFRC subsequently invited the RUF to share political power. RUF fighters entered the capital, and chaos reigned for several months. Many human rights violations, looting, and related acts by AFRC/RUF forces were reported, and the international community strongly criticized the junta, labeling it illegitimate.

International Opposition to AFRC/RUF. In October 1997, the U.N. Security Council imposed an oil and arms embargo on the AFRC/RUF and authorized ECOMOG to use force to implement the sanctions. In January 1998, ECOMOG, responding to an attack by AFRC/RUF forces, drove the rebel regime out of Freetown, the capital, and reinstated the Kabbah government in March 1998. The Security Council then ended its embargo on the Sierra Leone government – but maintained it for non-governmental forces. It also strengthened the office of the U.N. Special Envoy by expanding it to include military liaison and security advisory functions and personnel. In July 1998, the Security Council established the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) to monitor the conflict and advise on disarmament efforts and military restructuring. Unarmed UNOMSIL teams, under ECOMOG protection, documented many human rights atrocities and abuses against civilians by parties to the conflict. Fighting continued throughout the year.

In January 1999, the RUF again entered and captured Freetown, before being expelled by ECOMOG, then the Kabbah government's main source of defense and security. Before departing, the rebels looted and burned much of Freetown and attacked civilians, leaving hundreds of dead and injured, in an action they dubbed "Operation No Living Thing."

The July 1999 Lomé Peace Agreement

Despite the government's recapture of Freetown, the military situation remained stalemated, with the rebel alliance holding much of the countryside. In May 1999, President Kabbah began negotiations with the RUF. A peace deal, preceded by a cease-fire and a decrease in the number of RUF attacks, was struck in Lomé, Togo on July 7, 1999. The agreement ("Lomé" hereafter) provided for the termination of hostilities, the RUF's transformation into a conventional political party, and the formation of a government of national unity.⁸ Among other provisions, Lomé granted amnesty to all combatants, stipulated a disarmament process, and created a power-sharing arrangement that gave the RUF several cabinet posts. The United States actively supported the peace negotiations and the resulting accord. Rev. Jesse Jackson, then the Clinton Administration's Special Envoy for Democracy in Africa, helped mediate the pre-accord cease-fire. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright traveled to Freetown in October 1999, where she met with President Kabbah, and later with ex-rebel leaders, whom she reportedly urged forcefully to heed the terms of Lomé.

Lomé: Contrasting Views. Critics of Lomé condemned it as an act of appeasement to a brutal, armed criminal group that had broken all earlier peace agreements, systematically committed massive human rights violations, and had no

⁸Text of accord available online: [<http://www.Sierra-Leone.org/lomeaccord.html>].

plan to share in or reform governance. Critics said that RUF's violent actions were being rewarded with political power, and that the RUF would merely wait for ECOMOG to withdraw and then stage another coup. They criticized Lomé provisos allowing the RUF to hold top political offices without being elected, and the blanket amnesty that it afforded to RUF forces, noting that they had long been accused of diverse, devastating criminal actions.

Lomé defenders argued that many years of military tactics had failed to end the insurgency, that halting the extended conflict and extensive human rights abuses was paramount, and that negotiation was therefore necessary. They noted that Lomé gave the RUF largely symbolic governmental posts; provided for substantial political reform and a variety of checks and balances to ensure transparent governance; and broadened participation in government. They also noted that Lomé allowed the government, if necessary, to "seek the assistance and cooperation of other governments and their instruments of law enforcement to detect and facilitate the prosecution of violations" of the accord, including human rights violations under international human rights laws. The Special Court for Sierra Leone (see below) has been interpreted as an instantiation of this provision.

Post-Lomé Developments

In the months after Lomé was signed, many of its provisions were violated. Rebels attacked population centers, inflicting extreme human rights abuses. In August 1999, UNOMSIL and ECOMOG personnel were taken hostage by AFRC elements, and UNOMSIL personnel were detained by the RUF.

UNAMSIL

To assist the parties to implement Lomé, the U.N. Security Council in October 1999 terminated UNOMSIL and replaced it with the U.N. Mission in Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL. Since its formation, UNAMSIL's mandate and authority have been augmented several times. Its core mandate "integrates military and civilian aspects and envisages the deployment, in successive phases, into RUF-controlled areas of UNAMSIL troops, [U.N.] civil affairs, civilian police and human rights personnel, representatives of humanitarian agencies, and government personnel and assets to establish and consolidate State authority and basic services in these areas."⁹ On March 30, 2001, the Security Council increased UNAMSIL's maximum military component to 17,500. As of late December 31, 2001, the total number of UNAMSIL's military, observer, and police personnel stood at 17,420. The budget of UNAMSIL from July 2001 to June 2002 totaled \$699.2 million. For the mandate period ending on March 30, 2002, estimated U.N. costs totaled \$137.5 million, while estimated U.S. costs totaled \$37.93 million.¹⁰ There are no plans for U.S. troops to

⁹U.N., *Ninth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone*, S/2001/228, March 14, 2001.

¹⁰Information from U.N. and U.S. Department of State briefing, January 10, 2002. See also (continued...)

join UNAMSIL, but West African forces have been trained with U.S. assistance, in an effort dubbed Operation Focus Relief, for possible peacekeeping duties in Sierra Leone. Two OFR-trained Nigerian units have been deployed to Sierra Leone as part of UNAMSIL.¹¹

UNAMSIL Deployment. In October and November 2000, before the full deployment of UNAMSIL, security conditions deteriorated rapidly. RUF and AFRC elements fought against each other several heavy battles, the RUF captured large areas, and ECOMOG engaged in several armed confrontations with RUF fighters. Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of RUF, AFRC/ex-SLA and CDF fighters, provided for under Lomé, progressed slowly and not at all in many RUF-held zones.

In late 1999, ECOMOG troops began to redeploy to their home countries, as UNAMSIL gradually assumed peacekeeping responsibilities. In January 2000, UNAMSIL troops were detained, attacked, and disarmed in several confrontations with RUF fighters, who also seized U.N. weapons and equipment. Some items were later returned. The RUF continued to attack rural towns, maintained roadblocks prohibited by Lomé, and repeatedly impeded the operation of UNAMSIL. By mid-April 2000, ECOMOG had substantially reduced its presence, having handed over peacekeeping duties to UNAMSIL, to which Nigeria agreed to contribute troops. More than 9,500 UNAMSIL personnel were deployed by mid-May. DDR progress was limited and was increasingly obstructed by RUF fighters. Many of the institutions and processes provided for by Lomé, e.g., the Commissions for Human Rights, National Elections, and the Consolidation of Peace, were initiated. RUF participation was negligible, however, despite ongoing statements of support by RUF leaders. By April, the U.N. claimed that nearly half of the country's estimated 45,000 former combatants had turned in their weapons. But with increasing frequency, RUF fighters confronted and disarmed U.N. peacekeepers, and RUF forces maintained control over most diamond-mining areas. The conflict continued.

May 2000 U.N. Hostage Crisis. On May 1, 2000, a series of events began that culminated in armed hostilities between UNAMSIL and the RUF, and mass hostage-taking of U.N. personnel by the RUF. At a DDR camp, RUF fighters demanded that UNAMSIL hand over disarmed RUF fighters and a UNAMSIL observer. UNAMSIL personnel refused and denied the RUF entry into the camp. RUF forces responded by detaining seven UNAMSIL personnel, entering and destroying part of the camp, and looting the nearby town. The same day, another DDR camp was surrounded by RUF fighters. The RUF subsequently besieged U.N. facilities throughout the country. It systematically disarmed and took many U.N. troops hostage. On May 6, panic beset the residents of Freetown, after the U.N. erroneously reported a RUF advance on Freetown. By May 8 the RUF reportedly held

¹⁰(...continued)

CRS Issue Brief IB90103, *United Nations Peacekeeping: Issues for Congress*.

¹¹ See "Operation Focus Relief [OFR]," United States European Command [<http://www.eucom.mil/directorates/ecpa/operations/ofr.htm>] and CRS Report RS20659, *U.S. Military Training of West African Forces for Peacekeeping*. OFR is further discussed below.

about 500 U.N. personnel, although UNAMSIL personnel successfully fought or resisted detention in several cases. The RUF continued to violently confront, ambush, and take hostage U.N. units sent to halt the increasing violence.

At least nine U.N. personnel died as a result of the upsurge in RUF violence, but the majority of the U.N. hostages were released between mid-May and late June.¹² Most were transported to and released in Liberia. Their release was consistently reported as having resulted from negotiations between the RUF and Charles Taylor of Liberia. His mediation assistance had been requested by a May 8, 2000 Mano River Union summit and the U.N. Some analysts have attributed the releases to close RUF-Taylor ties rather than to skillful diplomacy on Taylor's part. In late June, 21 more U.N. peacekeepers were abducted and later released in Liberia. Days later, other U.N. operations were attacked by the RUF.

Operation Khukry. In mid-July 2000, UNAMSIL successfully carried out "Operation Khukry," an armed rescue of 233 UNAMSIL personnel held hostage in the eastern town of Kailahun. The operation was seen as helping to restore a measure of confidence in UNAMSIL's ability to enforce its mandate. However, in September, long-standing discord between the Indian UNAMSIL commander, Major-General Vijay Jetley, and Nigerian deputy UNAMSIL officials erupted in public. At issue were allegations of Nigerian commercial collaboration with the RUF in diamond dealing and leadership conflicts over operational matters. These became public after a confidential memorandum authored by Jetley was leaked to the press.¹³ The controversy, along with Jetley's stated frustration over lack of resources for UNAMSIL, reportedly motivated him to give up his post. The phased withdrawal of Indian troop contingents followed. Subsequently Jordan, a key troop contributor, implemented a long-held threat to withdraw from UNAMSIL. It contended that rich western nations had failed to make significant troop contributions to UNAMSIL, thereby unfairly placing on developing countries the burden of carrying out the often dangerous UNAMSIL mission. In November 2000, Kenyan Lieutenant General Daniel Ishmael Opande arrived in Sierra Leone to replace the departed Jetley.

Lomé Accord Questioned. The events of May and June 2000 caused the viability and status of the Lomé Accord – the formal framework for peace – to come into question. In a June 2000 speech, President Kabbah reportedly stated that the actions of the RUF had flagrantly violated the Accord and amounted to a revocation by the RUF of its Lomé commitments. He stated that the government reserves the right not to be bound by all of the Accord's provisions.

West Side Boys. In late August 2000, eleven members of the Royal Irish Regiment, part of a team of about 400 British military troops then training the SLA,

¹²U.N., *Fifth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone*, S/2000/751, July 31, 2000. At least a total of 59 UNAMSIL personnel – 55 military personnel, 2 military observers, and 2 others – had died in the course of the operation as of December 31, 2001. See U.N., *UNAMSIL Facts and Figures*, available on the U.N. web site [<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/unamsil/UnamsilF.htm>].

¹³A copy of the Jetley memo, "Report on the Crisis in Sierra Leone," is available on Sierra Leone web site [<http://www.Sierra-Leone.org/jetley0500.html>].

were abducted while on patrol by a rogue force of ex-SLA soldiers and bandits known as the West Side Boys, a group known for its extensive and violent criminal history. Negotiations ensued with the group, resulting in the release of five hostages, but later broke down. On September 10, responding to a breakdown in communication and violent threats from the West Side Boys, British forces carried out an armed rescue operation of the captives.

RUF Leadership Changes and Improved Peace Prospects

In late August 2000, chief RUF field commander Issa Sesay was elected by the RUF as its leader, replacing Sankoh. His selection followed a meeting in Liberia of West African leaders. In order to salvage Lomé, they convinced the RUF to replace Sankoh.¹⁴ The leadership change raised the possibility that the Lomé Accord could be resurrected or that a new peace deal could be struck. In mid-November 2000, a 30-day cease-fire between the RUF and the government was signed in Abuja, Nigeria under the auspices of ECOWAS. It required a renewed UNAMSIL-monitored cease-fire; renewed efforts to restore state authority by allowing the free movement of persons, goods and relief agencies, throughout Sierra Leone and UNAMSIL deployment to all areas under its mandate, including the diamond areas. It required the RUF to return all U.N. weapons and equipment it had seized and to resume the disarmament and demobilization process. It also called for an accelerated restructuring and retraining of an inclusive national military, and required the Civil Defense Force to be disarmed and demobilized. A series of RUF and UNAMSIL leadership meetings followed the cease-fire period; further meetings followed between local officials of these parties and with CDF and civilian organizations.

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) Resumes.

The November Abuja cease-fire agreement provided the basis for a resumption of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), which had been disrupted by the events of May and June 2000. In December 2000, the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration considered a revised operational plan for the DDR program. It provided for an enlarged role for UNAMSIL, and echoed the recommendations of a team that had reviewed the role of the U.N. in DDR activities in September 2000. New tasks included:

- (a) Disarmament: liaison with fighting forces and commanders; provision of adequate security; identification and establishment of reception/ disarmament centres; collection and disabling of weapons and ammunition; screening of ex-combatants' eligibility to enrol in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme; registration and transportation of ex-combatants from the disarmament sites to the demobilization centres, as well as transportation of disabled weapons and ammunition; inventory, storage and destruction of weapons;
- (b) Demobilization: provision of adequate security at the camps; issuance of identification cards; transfer of child ex-combatants to interim centres; formal

¹⁴Some RUF statements at the time of the leadership change asserted that Sesay's election was an interim measure that would be valid only until Sankoh's release from prison – an outcome that has been continually advocated by the RUF/RUFP.

discharge of ex-combatants from the camps; field coordination of demobilization centre activities... [and occasional] transportation for ex-combatants to the demobilization centres.¹⁵

To support DDR activities and the anticipated resumption of full-scale reintegration activities, in government-controlled areas, U.N. agencies initiated community-based projects designed to aid the resettlement of ex-combatants, returning refugees, and internally displaced persons (IDPs). These included the rehabilitation of basic housing, educational, health and sanitation facilities, and roads and bridges. Security conditions in RUF-controlled areas continued to hamper full-scale resettlement and reintegration programming. The U.N. Development Program (UNDP) undertook a range of efforts to strengthen the National Commission for Resettlement, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction.

Slow Progress and a Fragile Process. Despite many positive signs, progress toward peace remained mixed. Some RUF elements reportedly opposed the renewed peace process under Sesay's leadership and were said to be unwilling to demobilize or to give up territory, particularly in diamond-rich areas.¹⁶ More worrisome were a series of armed incursions into southwestern and southeastern Guinea – allegedly undertaken by RUF fighters – from Sierra Leonean territory and from Liberia. These attacks began in September 2000 and continued periodically in early 2001. The Guinean government attributed the raids to domestic opponents and to RUF units targeting Sierra Leonean refugee communities and nearby towns in Guinea. In the first quarter of 2001, Guinea responded aggressively, reportedly defeating many of its attackers. On multiple occasions in 2000 and 2001, it attacked RUF strongholds inside Sierra Leone, in some cases with mortars and helicopter gun ships. Such attacks often coincided with armed strikes by the pro-government CDF on RUF positions in eastern Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leonean and Guinean governments have reportedly agreed to coordinate their military strategies.

Progress Toward Peace in 2001

The Abuja agreement, military pressure on the RUF, widespread sentiment among Sierra Leoneans in favor of peace, and U.N. sanctions against the Liberian government, long a sponsor of the RUF, appear to have caused the RUF to cooperate in the implementation of the U.N.-sponsored Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) program in Sierra Leone throughout 2001. Progress, though slow-paced and subject to frequent temporary setbacks, appeared to result from a shared U.N. and the Sierra Leone government policy approach that simultaneously emphasized strong military deterrence and continuing political dialogue between the

¹⁵U.N., *Eighth Report of the Secretary-general on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone*, S/2000/1199, December 15, 2000, pp. 5, 6.

¹⁶Press accounts have periodically reported disagreements within the RUF leadership. In the past, such allegations have raised the possibility that the national leadership might not be able to implement its decisions locally or exert organizational control over field commanders. Challenges to the leadership have also come from certain RUF factions. For instance, Sam Bockarie, an RUF commander until recently exiled in Liberia, has periodically threatened to return to Sierra Leone, possibly to challenge the RUF leadership.

parties to the conflict. Some progress may have occurred as a result of events in Liberia. In 2000 and 2001, small groups of RUF fighters reportedly crossed into Liberia to assist the Liberian government to suppress a growing rebellion then centered in Lofa County in northern Liberia.

DDR Advances. Full-fledged DDR did not begin until late May 2001, after the RUF, the government and UNAMSIL had held several meetings focusing on new disarmament modalities and timetables, responsibilities of the parties, monitoring mechanisms, and related issues. As DDR efforts began anew in early 2001, the government faced problems in tracking the status and whereabouts of thousands of ex-combatants who had earlier entered into the DDR process but not completed it, especially after the breakdown of security in mid-2000.

After mid-May 2001, the DDR program began to be implemented rapidly. About 2,100 RUF and 4,300 CDF fighters reportedly disarmed between May 18 and July, and the RUF released hundreds of child soldiers and other abductees held by the RUF. Local tensions between local RUF and CDF were resolved in some areas. The RUF reopened key roads and returned limited numbers of vehicles and other items seized from the U.N. during the May crisis. It also agreed to assist the U.N. in locating and exhuming the remains of UNAMSIL personnel killed during the violence. In areas where disarmament had proceeded, it was followed by U.N. and newly trained SLA deployments, and government began to extend its authority into formerly RUF-controlled areas.

DDR Program Improvements. In mid-2001, the U.N. saw a need for better linking of DDR programs and for better long-term civilian reintegration assistance, including strengthening of linkages between various multilaterally and bilaterally funded community reintegration programs. The World Food Program (WFP) resumed food deliveries to ex-combatants in DDR camps and pre-positioned food stocks in preparation for full-scale resumption of DDR.

Some CDF and RUF commanders and ex-combatants expressed a lack of understanding about the DDR program. In response, UNAMSIL sought to increase sensitization and public awareness efforts “to avoid any unrealistic expectations and disappointments that could, as has happened before, lead to disturbances and instability.”¹⁷ The U.N. feared the reformation of disenfranchised groups that might again destabilize the country and region and emphasized the need to create income-earning opportunities for ex-combatants as part of broad efforts to revive the post-war economy.

The government planned, pending the receipt of adequate financial resources, to provide each ex-combatant who registered at a regional reintegration center with a reinsertion package, worth about \$200, consisting of food supplies, materials, and cash to assist with shelter, food, and health care needs. In March 2002, the U.N. reported that all disarmed combatants had received initial reinsertion payments. The government also established a short-term reintegration program for ex-combatants

¹⁷U.N., *Tenth Report of the Secretary-general on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone*, S/2001/627, June 25, 2001, p. 5.

following their demobilization encompassing vocational training, agriculture, apprenticeships, public works, child reintegration, and dependent support. The National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration set up regional reintegration offices. A camp for the mustering and screening of possible recruits for the newly retrained Sierra Leone Army was established. Many weapons collected from disarmed ex-combatants were converted into agricultural and other tools.

UNICEF, the lead agency for DDR with respect to child soldiers, continued to support emergency care, family tracing and reunification, and rehabilitation and reintegration activities. Several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) augmented the provision of basic relief services. DDR programming also involved extending micro-credit to the dependents of ex-combatants and planning for the ex-combatants' training in agriculture, vocational training, and small enterprise development; formal education and public works began.

Threats to DDR Progress

Funding. An on-going challenge for the government and UNAMSIL has been to ensure that adequate resources are available for reintegration and resettlement of IDPs, returning refugees, and ex-combatants. A donors' conference for Sierra Leone was held in June 2001. It focused on assistance needed for DDR programming supported by the World Bank-managed Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Sierra Leone. No donors made pledges during the conference. Many, however, expressed support for reported DDR progress and the presentation of the Sierra Leone government delegation, which included a top RUF representative. As of September 2001, pledges amounting to \$13.9 million had been received, but the amount fell short of estimated program requirements.

The Sierra Leone consolidated U.N. appeal for 2001 remained underfunded, at about 40% by mid-year. In early February 2002, a donor conference was held to consider funding of the consolidated U.N. appeal for 2002 and to mobilize funds for resettlement and reintegration activities. In late March 2002, the United States contributed \$1.9 million to fund ex-combatant reinsertion payments. Other U.S. funding (see below) supports related efforts, such as the USAID Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace programs in Sierra Leone. The World Food Program (WFP) warned in early March 2002 that its regional emergency programs in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone would run out of food by June unless new pledges for humanitarian aid were received.¹⁸ According to a March 2002 U.N. report, the government-managed reintegration program lacks \$13.48 million for budgeted 2002 activities.

Security Concerns. Progress toward peace was threatened by the arrest of the SLA chief of army training in early June 2001, after an arms cache was discovered at his home. In May, June, and July, the Guinean army attacked RUF positions in Sierra Leone, as did the CDF – in violation of the cease-fire. In response, the RUF temporarily suspended disarmament in mid-July 2001 in demand for the

¹⁸Africa News Service, "US Contributes \$1.9 Million to DDR," March 27, 2002.

release of their jailed leaders. The process remained fragile, and distrust among some armed elements was said to persist.¹⁹ Many CDF fighters reportedly turned over old weapons and turned in proportionally fewer weapons than RUF fighters, who were said to be turning over newer weapons at a ratio of one gun per fighter. In late July, the RUF prevented a large convoy of government police officers from deploying in the rebel-held city of Makeni in northern Bombali District, as per earlier agreements.

To facilitate disarmament in Kono, in July, a moratorium on diamond mining in the district was agreed to by the Joint Committee on DDR, made up of representatives of UNAMSIL, the government, and the RUF.²⁰ The agreement could not be enforced. Illegal mining activities continued, but disarmament progressed, and further efforts to suspend mining continued over the succeeding months. In August, as a peace process confidence-building measure prior to a meeting over several contested DDR issues, the government freed 41 jailed RUF leaders.²¹ They included Pallo Bangura, the RUF's acting secretary-general and a former energy minister in the Lomé coalition government before May 2000, and Daniel Kallon, RUF chairman.

By September 2001, disarmament had been completed in four districts, including diamond-rich Kono district, although clashes there between RUF and some CDF elements. The latter was reportedly operating outside the national CDF command structure, hindered the initial stages of local disarmament. These were investigated and mediated, where possible, by UNAMSIL. The Joint Committee on DDR continued to meet regularly to map out subsequent DDR activities, implementation of which was reportedly aided by the government's release on August 9 of the 41 RUF detainees. Little additional U.N. equipment seized by the RUF was returned. The RUF in Makeni temporarily threatened to stop disarmament over dissatisfaction related to the locale for weapons handover and allegations that CDF fighters were not being disarmed. In late September, ex-combatants in Freetown rioted over delays in the payment of their DDR reinsertion packages, underlining the urgent need to fund reintegration activities. Reinsertion package payment began in mid-October.

Civilian Disarmament. In October and November 2001, the Joint Committee on DDR agreed to initiate the collection of civilian-held shotguns and small arms. These had been excluded from the UNAMSIL-monitored disarmament program. This voluntary disarmament program, undertaken by the Sierra Leone police force, began in November 2001 and was expected to have been completed by March 2002. In Kono, disarmed CDF and RUF ex-fighters clashed over mining claims in late September 2001. In newly disarmed areas, for which long-term reintegration funds were not yet available, the UNDP and Britain funded short-term bridging projects in which ex-combatants repaired roads and rehabilitated public buildings.

¹⁹ Associated Press, "UN Finds Bodies Of 10 Killed By Sierra Leone Rebels," July 30, 2001.

²⁰ Associated Press, "Sierra Leone Rebels, Govt Sign Pact To Resume Disarming," July 17, 2001, *inter alia*.

²¹ The RUF later asserted that only 17 of its members were released, not 41, and that the released prisoners were only a fraction of the 121 RUF members that the group claimed were being held by the government and that some of those released were not RUF members.

New RUF Demands. In early November 2001 – by which time 29,000 ex-fighters had, since May 18, given up their weapons – the government released more RUF detainees prior to a meeting with the RUF on DDR issues. However, shortly afterward, in mid-November just prior to the start of disarmament in the diamond-rich, volatile town of Tongo Field, RUF leader Issa Sesay ordered his forces to halt disarmament. The RUF sought to demonstrate its disagreement with the decision by the National Consultative Conference to create a new national electoral system (see below) and again sought the release of Foday Sankoh. During a December U.N.-RUF meeting on the delay, Sesay presented new demands. He called for the creation of a trust fund to aid the RUF in transforming itself into a political party and the revival of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, headed by Sankoh under the Lomé Peace Agreement prior to May 2000. Other RUF demands included confirmation of the RUF's registration for presidential and parliamentary elections and guarantees for their security once they disarmed. The delays caused the extension to January 5 of the disarmament program, which was to have ended November 30.

War Ends. By mid-December 2001, disarmament of combatants was completed in 10 of Sierra Leone's 12 districts. The total number of ex-combatants disarmed exceeded prior projections. This depleted the already scarce resources available for DDR and strained logistical provisions for reintegration. UNAMSIL, which reached its maximum authorization of 17,500 personnel, deployed to all 12 districts, and the government continued to extend its authority into formerly RUF-controlled areas.

On January 12, 2002, after the official end of the disarmament process January 4, 11 RUF commanders turned in their weapons in the eastern town of Kailahun. UNAMSIL commander Daniel Opande, along with the government and RUF leaders, declared the conflict over. News accounts, however, reported that some ex-combatants were continuing to turn in weapons after the deadline. The process was officially ended after a January 17 meeting in Freetown of the Joint Committee on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. The next day, a symbolic weapons burning ceremony was held to mark the end of the war and the disarmament of a total of 46,500 combatants. Following the end of disarmament, UNAMSIL planned to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of the exercise. A March 2002 U.N. report on UNAMSIL noted that many U.N. weapons and equipment seized by the RUF remained unaccounted for.

Transition to Peace: Post-Conflict Issues

As the end of disarmament drew near, increasing attention focused on the creation of processes and institutions designed to lay the basis for long-term stability. These include the implementation of national elections; the creation of a Special Court for Sierra Leone, as well as a Truth and Reconciliation Commission; and military reform and retraining.

Elections²²

Overview. Many observers see the May 14, 2002 elections as the best hope for a durable peace in Sierra Leone and as the foundation of post-conflict reconstruction of political, economic, and institutional life. Widespread disenfranchisement was a key grievance cited by the RUF during the war, and the elections will allow the RUF to complete its on-going transformation from an armed rebel movement into a conventional political opposition party. The May 14 poll is also important because elections have been repeatedly postponed. The current government's term has been twice extended by parliament under war-time emergency constitutional provisions, leading some government opponents to question its legitimacy. In addition, certain Lomé provisions are theoretically contingent upon the holding of elections. The electoral process is currently under way. In early April 2002, campaigning began following the close of the party and candidate registration processes.

Early Election Results. Voter turnout on May 14 was reported to be high. Initial reported returns indicated that Kabbah was winning the vote with over 70 % of votes counted overall. By contrast, military personnel – who cast their ballots prior to the public's vote – were said to have voted heavily in favor of former AFRC junta leader Johnny Paul Koroma. He was said to have received over 70% of the military vote, while Kabbah had garnered around 18%. If no candidate wins 55% of the presidential vote, a run-off between the top two candidates will follow. In simultaneous parliamentary elections, parties must receive 12.5% or more of the vote to receive seats in the legislature. Minor and scattered irregularities were reported during polling, possibly including under-age and double voting. The preceding campaign was peaceful, apart from one major incident, in which ruling Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) supporters clashed with those of the RUF. The incident turned into a small riot, in which RUF offices were attacked and RUF members attacked by crowds; it was broken up by UNAMSIL troops.

Background. Presidential elections were constitutionally mandated to be held by February 2001 and parliamentary elections by May 2001. The constitution, however, contains provisions that allow the parliament to extend the normal presidential and parliamentary terms of 5 years by 6-month increments in times of war. In January 2001, President Kabbah, citing the state of emergency and the poor security situation, formally asked for such extensions. The parliament granted these in mid-February and in March extended the state of emergency. It set out successful demobilization and a satisfactory security environment as conditions for elections.

²²For elections documentation, see *Information Relating to the May 2002 Elections in Sierra Leone* [<http://www.sierra-leone.org/documents-elections.html>].

The electoral postponement was widely expected. But government critics asserted that in the absence of elections, the Kabbah government was losing legitimacy, particularly given its failure to end the war and begin socio-economic reconstruction. Opposition parties and the RUF called for the creation of an interim government prior to the end of the government's mandate in September and prior to elections. In March 2001, a planned march in Freetown against the stay of elections was refused a permit. Its organizers were arrested after a raid on the group's premises. Police claimed that they could not provide adequate security for the march and alleged that the organizers were RUF associates. In the same month, the National Electoral Commission (NEC) proposed an electoral schedule targeting late October 2001 for candidate nominations and late December as an election deadline – contingent upon a peaceful atmosphere. Some critics asserted that the poll date was too soon, noting that progress toward peace remained fragile, and the RUF remained armed. In the wake of calls for an interim government, Kabbah reshuffled his cabinet in March 2001, adding figures from outside the ruling party.

In May 2001 the government stated its willingness to address some RUF political concerns. These included the release of detained RUF leaders, some of whom had died in custody; the transformation of RUF into a viable political party; and the provision of land or building facilities to the party in the capital and provinces, in order to enable the RUF to meet legal criteria related to the establishment of national political parties. Also in May 2001, a U.N. team reviewed with the NEC, UNAMSIL, and other actors the nature and timing of likely U.N. electoral assistance, including the coordination and mobilization of electoral support by international donors. In mid-June, the NEC requested U.N. technical and logistical electoral assistance, including the dispatch of an electoral process observation team and transport, communication, and security assistance. The U.N. also anticipated providing civic education and anticipated a process of electoral monitoring throughout the country involving diverse actors and international organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and ECOWAS.

In reports to the Security Council in June and September 2001, Secretary-General Kofi Annan laid out key preconditions for free and fair elections. These included the completion of DDR; the transformation of RUF into a political party; nationwide restoration of civil authority and freedom of movement; the full deployment of UNAMSIL and the Sierra Leone army to provide nationwide security; and measures to accommodate the civic participation of internally displaced persons and repatriating refugees.

In early September 2001, the government announced a new date for parliamentary and presidential elections: May 14, 2002. In mid-September, the parliament extended for six months the state of emergency and the term of president Kabbah, despite repeated calls opposition calls for an interim government. The government asserted that the constitution provides only for an extension of an incumbent government; an interim government, in this view, would be unconstitutional.

Electoral Reform. The May poll took place under a new electoral system. Under the old system, parliamentary seats were divided among constituencies of equal population. Parties nominated a national slate of party candidates, citizens

voted for their favored parties, and winning parties were allocated legislative seats based upon their proportion of the national vote. In November 2001, a National Consultative Conference that included representatives of the government, 23 political parties, and civil society groups met in Freetown and endorsed a National Electoral Commission electoral reform proposal known as the “District Block” system. Under the system, each district, regardless of population size, holds a given number of parliamentary seats. Electoral constituencies consist of Sierra Leone’s 12 administrative and two special electoral districts. Candidates for parliament are selected from district-level party candidate lists, and voters elect their representative from these lists. Candidates win based upon the percentage of votes their party received in a given district. The national electorate as one single constituency directly elects the president, choosing from among party-nominated candidates. Under the system, 68 seats will be popularly elected, while the country’s 149 paramount chiefs will elect 12 parliamentary representatives to the 80-seat parliament on May 5.

The system replaces the former electoral system, which would have required a new national census and redrawn constituency boundaries. Such an undertaking was seen as unfeasible by Conference delegates, given the short time remaining prior to the scheduled May election date, a lack of resources, and a large displaced population. The Sierra Leone’s parliament approved the new electoral system in December 2001, but it remained controversial. The RUF and other opposition parties criticized it on the basis that it does not reflect population distributions; constituencies with low populations would have the same power as densely populated areas. The RUF halted disarmament in protest of the decision (see above) but later assented to them. A mid-December 2001 opinion poll found that the new electoral system is not well understood by the public. It also found that substantial public skepticism exists about the objectivity of the NEC, which some see as unreceptive to public input or as favoring the incumbent government. Only 48% of poll respondents trusted the NEC to run free and fair elections, and 57% favored a postponement of the May election date.

Progress Toward Elections. By late March 2002, 19 political parties had fully registered to participate in the elections, but only 14 were said by Chief Electoral Commissioner Walter Nicol to be fully functional. As of April 9, 2002, candidates running for president included Pallo Bangura (RUF); Ernest Bai Koroma (APC); Raymond Bamidele Thompson (CUPP); Dr. Raymond Kamara (GAP); Zainab Hawa Bangura (MOP); Johnny Paul Koroma (PLP); President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah (SLPP); Dr. John Karefa-Smart (UNPP); and Andrew Duramani Turay (YPP).²³ According to NEC plans, 5,400 polling stations in about 3,000 locations were being set up. The large number of stations was expected to strain the organizational and financial resources of the NEC and national police. According to the U.N., the NEC has estimated the cost of the elections at about \$11.6 million. It has proposed that the government would contribute \$3.5 million of the total, while the balance would be funded by donor governments. By mid-December 2001, the government had funded \$495,000 of this amount, and donor countries and international organizations had pledged additional funding, but the total pledged left

²³Sierra Leone News, “April 9 [2002],” Sierra Leone Web.

an unfunded balance of \$2.28 million. In an attempt to make up for the shortfall, the UNDP created an Elections Trust Fund and funded it with \$250,000 in seed money.

Voter Registration. Voter registration has been another contentious issue. A key issue was the question of where and how refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) would be registered to vote and where they would vote – in their current place of residence, or in their home district. If the latter was required, it was unclear how so many IDPs would be resettled in time for the voter registration. Many refugees remain outside the country, and many repatriated refugees and IDPs remain dislocated outside their normal districts of residence. The National Electoral Commission (NEC) reportedly announced that refugees returning to Sierra Leone before mid-April could register and vote by showing a UNHCR card as proof of identity. General voter registration also faced problems. The process was delayed by two weeks, following technical problems. The delay reportedly contributed to an initially low registration turnout, the process was extended by three days, following a surge in registrations. Over 2 million voters reportedly registered. Voter lists have been publicly exhibited; objections or irregularities could be registered at district regional offices. Although the NEC described the exercise as successful, the voter registration process and associated expenses received substantial criticism in the Sierra Leonean press.

Party Registration. Party registration was also point of contention. By the beginning of January 2002, only seven parties had reportedly met registration requirements, such as the acquisition of offices in all of Sierra Leone's regions.²⁴ The slow party registration process may have been due to pre-election hedging and alliance-building by opposition parties in the face of an SLPP-dominated political landscape. Some reportedly considering merging, and party switches and defections were reported.²⁵ Questions over the regulations governing party registration and subsequent campaigning were also raised. In early February, Attorney General Minister of Justice Solomon Berewa reportedly asserted that the Electoral Act passed by parliament required that campaigning begin after the nomination period for parliamentarians and presidential candidates had ended in March. In a press interview, however, NEC chairman Walter Nicol stated that the NEC, which regulates campaigning, was allowing political parties to organize political rallies. Political parties reportedly had not been campaigning for fear that the ruling party might employ the state of emergency, which will reportedly be lifted shortly, to crack down on its critics.²⁶ As of late March 2002, 19 political parties had fully registered

²⁴Panafrican News Agency, "Sierra Leonean Electoral Commission Sensitises Voters," January 2, 2002.

²⁵See appendix, *Sierra Leone's Political Parties and Leaders*, below. See also Mohamed Kakay, "No Presidential Candidate For PDP!," Standard Times (Sierra Leone), February 6, 2002; Standard Times, "Elections 2002...Mass Defection Awaits APC," December 12, 2001; Concord Times, "Will Grand Alliance Make It?," January 23, 2002; and Mohamed Kakay, "House Approves 8 Candidates For Parties," Standard Times (Sierra Leone), February 6, 2002.

²⁶Sulaiman Momodu and Osman Benk Sankoh, "Electoral Commission Boss Okays Campaigning," Concord Times (Sierra Leone), February 6, 2002

to participate in the presidential and parliamentary elections, but only 14 were said by Chief Electoral Commissioner Walter Nicol to be fully functional.²⁷

RUF and Elections. In late November 2001, in order to assist in the continuing transformation of the RUF into the RUF Party (RUFPP), as per the Lomé Accord, several RUF officials underwent Nigerian government-sponsored electoral training in Abuja, Nigeria. The Sierra Leone government has helped the RUFPP to obtain political party offices in Freetown and in the provinces; all political parties are required to maintain offices in each of four electoral regions. The RUF reportedly experienced problems in obtaining facilities in some locales because landlords were unwilling to rent facilities to the former rebels.

The status of former paramount RUF leader Foday Sankoh has been a volatile election issue, as it was during the DDR process. The RUF temporarily halted DDR several times, in part due to Sankoh's continued imprisonment under the wartime state of emergency. Sankoh had been detained after a May 2000 public demonstration in Freetown against RUF atrocities, which Sankoh's bodyguards fired upon, killing 21. After the state of emergency was lifted in March 2002 to allow for elections to take place, Sankoh was formally charged with 70 criminal offenses, including murder, allowing the government to continue to legally detain him. The RUFPP had long maintained that Sankoh would run as its presidential candidate. The government, however, barred Sankoh from running, citing a range of Sierra Leonean electoral laws. As a detainee, Sankoh could not legally register to vote or meet other requirements to register as a candidate. The RUFPP protested the ban on Sankoh's candidacy and subsequently missed the presidential candidate registration deadline but was given an extension. It later named RUFPP Secretary General Pallo Bangura as its candidate for president. Peter Borbor Vandy, a former government minister under the defunct Lomé government of national unity, will run as the RUFPP vice presidential candidate.

U.N. Electoral Role.²⁸ In order to ensure the NEC's ability to organize and conduct a free, fair, and transparent electoral process that meets minimum international standards, the U.N. assisted the NEC with technical and logistical assistance and providing security support for the electoral process. The December 2001 U.N. Secretary-General's report on UNAMSIL (S/2001/1195) outlines U.N. electoral to Sierra Leone; the measures in the report were approved by Security Council Resolution 1389 (2002).

In order to ensure the NEC's ability to organize and conduct a free, fair, and transparent electoral process that meets minimum international standards, the U.N. provided the NEC with technical and logistical assistance and security support. A UNAMSIL electoral unit monitored developments and assisted with the electoral process. To provide election security, UNAMSIL military sectors were realigned to match electoral district boundaries, where feasible. The Sierra Leone police were designated the primary responding agency in case of election-related violence or

²⁷Sierra Leone News Archives, March 2002, Sierra Leone Web.

²⁸For background on the U.N. electoral role, see [<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/unamsil/DB/factsheets.htm>].

public disorder. UNAMSIL was charged with providing backup support. UNAMSIL also assisted with the transportation of election workers and materials; storage and distribution of election materials before the election; and transport of ballot papers after the election. The mission supported a program of public information dissemination consisting of NEC electoral and civic education, news, public affairs, and entertainment broadcasts on Radio UNAMSIL; production and distribution of written informational materials; public outreach meetings with local communities, youth groups, women's organizations, ex-combatants and journalists; and educational entertainment. During the election campaigning stage, UNAMSIL used its assets to broaden candidates' access to media. Radio UNAMSIL provided parties with a forum to explain and publicize their political programs.

Non-Governmental Organization Electoral Support. The U.S. National Democratic Institute, a democracy-fostering non-governmental organization (NGO), and a Sierra Leonean non-profit partner, the Forum for Democratic Initiative, have established a resource center in Freetown to provide training, printing, educational, and media facilities for all registered political parties and candidates in preparation for elections. The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the Commonwealth are providing to the NEC technical support on management, legal, operational, and budgeting issues, and voter registration.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone

In October 2000, as permitted under Lomé, the U.N. proposed a Special Court for Sierra Leone following consultations with the Sierra Leonean government and civil society groups.²⁹ The court will "prosecute persons who bear the greatest responsibility for the commission of crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law, as well as crimes under relevant Sierra Leonean law committed within the territory of Sierra Leone," i.e., certain political and military leaders.³⁰ Between twelve and twenty-five defendants are expected to be tried. The court can impose sentences of imprisonment but not death.

In August 2001, after reaching an agreement in principle on the establishment of the Special Court and applicable statutes, the government requested that the temporal jurisdiction of the Court be extended to cover the period since March 1991, when the conflict started. The draft statute and court agreement had provided for a temporal jurisdiction that began in November 1996. This date, which marks the date of an earlier, aborted peace agreement, was reportedly accepted by the government in the final agreements establishing the court, which were signed in January 2002, following the visit in the same month of a U.N. court planning mission to Sierra Leone. The planning mission, led by the U.N. Office of Legal Affairs, finalized arrangements for the establishment of the Special Court. It assessed the needs of the Prosecutor's Office and the Court Registry, the status of investigations and evidence,

²⁹The original proposal was modified subsequently, following discussions between the Secretary-General and the U.N. Security Council. See U.N., "Report of the Secretary-General on the Establishment of a Special Court for Sierra Leone," S/2000/915, October 4, 2000, [<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/reports/2000/915e.pdf>].

³⁰*Ibid.*, page 1.

and the government's capacity to host the court and provide court and prison premises and personnel.³¹ It also examined the proposed relationship between the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (see below).

The size and budget of the proposed court were scaled down in response to organizational design and cost concerns expressed by Security Council members. The original proposal called for two trial chambers and a scheme for alternate judges; the final agreement establishing the court provides for one trials chamber and one appeals chamber. To ensure objectivity and avoid possible charges of bias or retribution, the Court's judges, prosecutors, and much of its staff are being appointed by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan. David M. Crane, an American Department of Defense lawyer, was named to the post of prosecutor for the Special Court. Robin Vincent, a British legal administrator, has been appointed registrar for the court. The Court is scheduled to begin setting up operations in the near future and is expected to be fully functional by October 2002.

Court Funding and Operation. A March 2001 U.N. funding appeal for the Court did not elicit adequate operational funding. In mid-June 2001, following a meeting between the U.N. Secretariat and a group of possible contributing states, the Court's proposed budget was reduced from \$144.6 million to \$57 million for the court's first 3 years of operation. As of July 6, the U.N. Secretariat had received pledges of \$15 million for the first year of operation and \$20.4 million for the subsequent 2 years. Annan indicated in a July 13 letter to the Security Council that these pledged contributions were sufficient to establish the court and begin operations once payments are deposited with the U.N. On July 24, Reuters reported that the U.N. Security Council had approved the establishment of the court.

As of early December 2001, the U.N. had received donor contributions of \$14.8 million for the first year of the Court's operation and pledges of \$13 million and \$7.4 million for the following two years, leaving a budget shortfall of \$1.4 million for the first year and \$19.6 million for the two following years. The United States contributed \$5 million for the court's establishment and first year of operation and may offer up to a total of \$15 million for the Court's operation.³² The total funding received and the Secretary General's belief that further required funds would be forthcoming caused the Secretary General to authorize final procedures to establish the court.

The Special Court: Contrasting Views. Some observers have questioned the size and scope of the court, both as originally proposed and in its later scaled-down form, and what they see as a high ratio of costs per defendant, given the limited number of defendants likely to be tried before the court. They liken the establishment of the Sierra Leonean court to the creation of the International Criminal Tribunal for

³¹The mission's findings (U.N. document S/2002/246) are online; see the U.N. web site at [<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/letters/2002/sglet02.htm>].

³²Scott Timmreck, "U.S. Contributes \$5 Million to Startup of Sierra Leone Court (Pledges \$15 Million over Three Years)," *Washington File*, U.S. State Department, August 1, 2001; *Washington File*, "U.S. Strongly Supports Peace in Sierra Leone (Statement by State Dept. Acting Spokeswoman Lynn Cassel)," U.S. State Department, January 18, 2002.

Rwanda (ICTR), which they see as having had a very modest outcome, in terms of the limited numbers of defendants tried, compared to the cost of creating and maintaining it. They also fear that creating the court will do little to bolster national judicial capacity in Sierra Leone, which they see as crucial to rebuilding a stable and functioning state. They see the delivery of justice as fundamentally a function of national governments, not international bodies, and are broadly opposed to the possible further development of U.N.-administered juridical bodies and mandates in judicial affairs.³³ Others worry that limiting the territorial jurisdiction of the court to crimes committed in Sierra Leone may allow defendants to escape justice by exiting Sierra Leone and will do nothing to judicially sanction alleged external supporters of the RUF. Chief among such persons is Charles Taylor, who many view as responsible for abetting past atrocities attributed to the RUF. Some also question the limited temporal and personal jurisdiction of the court, asserting that these provisions will effectively result in impunity for many rank and file violators of human rights.

Proponents of the court stress that it is a tribunal of mixed Sierra Leonean and international legal jurisdiction and of limited duration; they do not view it as functionally or institutionally equivalent or broadly comparable to the ICTR. They note that the size and budget of the proposed court, as originally proposed, has been scaled down dramatically. They also observe that Sierra Leonean jurists will be intimately involved in the court's legal process, which will employ Sierra Leonean law where applicable to the prosecution of defendants. They also see the court as a concrete means of ending impunity for human rights violations in Sierra Leone, speeding national reconciliation, and demonstrating international political will and institutional support for the enforcement of the rule of law in Sierra Leone. Some observers and members of the RUF fear that the court will focus its prosecutorial attention on the RUF, despite U.N. assertions that the process "is not going to be a witch hunt."³⁴ War crimes and crimes against humanity have reportedly been committed by all parties to the conflict, including the RUF forces; the AFRC junta; government forces, including the SLA and the CDF; and international peacekeeping forces. The RUF has demanded assurances that the Court and the TRC be impartial and hear the cases of all those accused of atrocities during the period in question, not only RUF members.

According to Amnesty International, the functional relationship between the Special Court and the TRC has not been sufficiently defined. Outstanding issues in late 2001, according to Amnesty, included:

the timing and sequencing of both institutions, including whether they will operate concurrently or consecutively; sharing of information between the Special Court and the TRC; the rights of witnesses, including the right to silence if the answer to the question would incriminate them; the handling by the TRC of information which could potentially be incriminatory; the implication for the

³³Many such concerns parallel those of critics of proposals to create an international criminal court. See CRS Report RL30020, *The International Criminal Court Treaty: Description, Policy Issues, and Congressional Concerns*.

³⁴Luis Ramirez, "UN to Establish Special International Court for Sierra Leone," VOANews.com, January 16, 2002.

work of the Special Court if individual perpetrators for human rights abuses are named by the TRC; contact by the TRC with individuals under indictment by the Special Court; and the implications of the different temporal jurisdictions of the Special Court (from 30 November 1996, currently open-ended) and the TRC (23 March 1991 to 7 July 1999).³⁵

The January 2002 Special Court planning mission report addresses many of these issues.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission³⁶

The Lomé peace agreement provided for the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The parliament established the TRC by passing the Truth and Reconciliation Act 2000 in February 2000. According to the Act, the purpose of the TRC is

to create an impartial historical record of violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law related to the armed conflict in Sierra Leone, from the beginning of the Conflict in 1991 to the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement; to address impunity, to respond to the needs of the victims, to promote healing and reconciliation and to prevent a repetition of the violations and abuses suffered.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is expected to include traditional structures and methods of reconciliation as well as conventional, formal hearings. In early 2001, a research project on traditional forms of conflict resolution and reconciliation was initiated, as was a public awareness campaign that included broadcasts by Radio UNAMSIL. It is projected to operate for 15 months and require a budget totaling just under \$10 million, which the U.N. anticipates will be funded by the government and by donors. It is expected to begin operations by mid-2002; public “Sensitization Drives” began in August 2001. Four national and three international members of the TRC have been selected and their names forwarded to President Kabbah for approval. The UNHCR and UNAMSIL have assisted in the design of TRC protocols to protect victims, witnesses, and perpetrators, with a particular focus on children in these categories; to collect and show evidence; and to define the relationship between the TRC and the Special Court. An interim Executive Secretary of the Commission has been appointed and a TRC Secretariat has reportedly initiated TRC activities. In late February 2002, UNHCR launched a donor appeal for the funding of the TRC.

Related Reconciliation Issues. As part of DDR, and as more communities have begun receiving demobilized ex-combatants, UNAMSIL has organized face-to-face reconciliation sessions between RUF officials and paramount chiefs and has promoted public works programs that enable ex-combatants to help rebuild local communities. UNAMSIL, together with the government’s Ministry of Justice and Attorney-General, has been working on restoring local courts in some parts of the

³⁵Amnesty International, “Sierra Leone: Renewed Commitment Needed To End Impunity,” *AFR 51/007/2001*, September 24, 2001, page 14.

³⁶For further background, see [<http://www.sierra-leone.org/trc.html>].

country and has been undertaking a public education campaign on the purpose and objectives of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. According to Amnesty International, the Sierra Leonean judicial system is devastated and requires the following in order to become fully functional:

improvement to the remuneration and conditions of service of the judiciary in order to encourage competent and experienced legal practitioners to take up judicial appointments; the provision of appropriate administrative and information technology support systems in order to facilitate efficient management of cases; the provision of basic law libraries with national statutes, collections of decisions of the higher courts, regional and international human rights instruments ratified by Sierra Leone, and basic legal text books; and extensive refurbishment and equipping of court buildings.³⁷

Military Reform

Military Restructuring and British Training Assistance. Article XVII of the Lomé Accord provides for a restructured and Sierra Leone armed forces, inclusive of volunteer ex-combatants of the RUF, CDF, and the SLA. Following the breakdown of the Lomé process in May 2000, Britain undertook a military intervention and later began a program of training for the SLA, which in April 2002 was renamed the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces.

During the 1990s, Britain, the former colonial ruler of Sierra Leone, provided periodic military and logistical assistance to the government of Sierra Leone and to ECOMOG and, in some instances, undertook military operations to protect British interests and to rescue abducted citizens in the country. Britain has also contributed troops to UNAMSIL. In early 1999, the UK provided limited training assistance for the Sierra Leone Army following the reinstatement of the Kabbah government.

In response to the May 2000 U.N. hostage crisis, Britain deployed a substantial number of troops to protect British interests. Although the UK government announced that its troops would not enter into direct combat, its show of force effectively augmented the security of the Kabbah government and UNAMSIL. A British aircraft carrier and several other warships and more than 800 British troops were reportedly dispatched to Sierra Leone in mid-May 2000. Freetown's Lungi airport was secured by UK paratroopers and British troops reportedly patrolled defensive lines near the capital, engaging firefights on several occasions, and provided air transport to U.N. troops. After the height of the May crisis, a phased withdrawal of the bulk of UK forces began, ending in mid-June. On May 19, 2000, a British military official announced the dispatch of a 90-person British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT) to supplement existing British training assistance to the SLA.³⁸ Britain also reportedly supplied arms to the SLA; this action caused controversy after some weapons reportedly ended up in the hands of child combatants.

³⁷Ibid., page 18.

³⁸Alex Duval Smith, "Britain Pledges 'Open-Ended' Military Support for Sierra Leone," *The Independent* (London), May 20, 2000.

The BMATT training began in June 2000 and included trainers from a number of Commonwealth countries; it was later expanded by several hundred additional trainers. British officers also took on an enlarged advisory role in SLA operational matters; similar UK advisory support was provided to UNAMSIL. In November 2000, a UK naval amphibious force made a widely publicized landing near Freetown designed, in part, to demonstrate British military commitment to Sierra Leone. The deployment came as some RUF elements were reported to be threatening a renewed offensive, possibly to bolster the RUF negotiating position during then-current peace negotiations, and in the wake of the announced withdrawal of Jordanian and Indian UNAMSIL units. Over 6,500 SLA soldiers had completed British training by late January 2001, when UK Defense Secretary Geoff Hoon announced an additional Short Term Training Team (STTT) military training assistance package. In September 2001, a British-led International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT) was deployed to provide continued training and other advisory assistance. Britain announced that a total of 8,500 SLA trainees had completed training by that date.

Human Welfare and Socio-Economic Recovery

Human Rights

During the conflict, thousands of Sierra Leonean civilians were the victims of severe, extensive human abuses carried out by combatants from nearly all parties to the conflict, but particularly, according to many observers, by the RUF and the AFRC-RUF regime. Abuses included murder; torture; the amputation of limbs and other bodily mutilation; rape and sexual violence; abduction; forced labor, concubinage, and military service; forced residential dislocation; the destruction and theft of homes and property; and severe infringements of civil liberties. Both adults and children were the victims of such abuses.³⁹ Under the wartime state of emergency, lifted on March 1, 2001, government political detainees were held incommunicado, without charge, without access to legal advice, and in some cases, at secret locations.⁴⁰

The human rights situation improved considerably beginning in the second half of 2000, with notable exceptions. These included human rights abuses associated with cross-border RUF attacks into Guinea from Sierra Leone and retaliatory attacks by the Guinean army in late 2000 and 2001 and violence in diamond mining zones in 2001. The U.N. has launched an investigation into reported allegations of sexual exploitation of women and girls by U.N. personnel; the U.N. investigation was on-going in early 2002.

³⁹Abuses have been extensively documented by Human Rights Watch; Amnesty International; Physicians for Human Rights; other human rights organizations; the U.N.; and the press.

⁴⁰U.N. Security Council, "Eighth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone," S/2000/1199, December 15, 2000.

The U.N. has undertaken a range of human rights training programs for UNAMSIL forces, the newly trained military, the police, prison officials, and the public at large. It also assisted in the establishment of a national Human Rights Commission and established local human rights offices in many districts. The UNHCR has sponsored ongoing programs to ensure the protection of children and other vulnerable populations, including ex-combatant youth, unaccompanied minors and orphans, and single-family households and to trace and reunite families of lost children. Disarmament has reportedly improved the human rights situation considerably. The extension of government authority has, however, revealed new evidence of wartime atrocities, including mass graves, sites of torture and execution, and personal accounts of abuses.

Resettlement

Refugees and the Internally Displaced. In late 2000 and into early 2001, as Sierra Leonean refugees in neighboring Guinea fled that country following cross-border attacks by Liberian-sponsored armed elements beginning in September 2000, humanitarian conditions in Sierra Leone deteriorated. The unanticipated new arrivals from Guinea placed demands on humanitarian assistance organizations already operating at full capacity. The U.N. reported a rise in criminal activities in the Freetown area, which was attributed to the influx of new arrivals, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and ex-combatants with little access to basic resources. Humanitarian access to much RUF-controlled areas remained limited.

Throughout 2001, as UNAMSIL expanded its areas of deployment, and as DDR proceeded, humanitarian assistance organizations were able to expand their service areas. Refugees continued to repatriate to Sierra Leone from Guinea, though over 200,000 remained in Guinea, Liberia, and other sub-regional host countries as of mid-March 2002. U.N.-assisted, phased resettlement of IDPs was underway in late 2001/early 2002; some IDPs were also resettling independently. In early 2002, the U.N. estimated that approximately 260,000 IDPs and refugee returnees were likely to require assistance.

From mid-2001 onward, Sierra Leone received periodic influxes of Liberian refugees and Sierra Leonean returnees fleeing growing conflict in northern Liberia. The in-flow of these refugees increased in late 2001/early 2002; more than 11,000 Liberians and about 7,400 Sierra Leoneans had been registered by immigration authorities as of early March 2002. Many were being transported inland because of insecurity in the border areas.

Transition from Relief to Recovery

Socio-economic recovery was given a large boost as DDR programming increased during 2001. DDR-related assistance included the extension to ex-combatants and their dependents of micro-credit, training in agriculture, vocational training, and small enterprise development, as well as the extension of formal education and ex-combatant participation in public works projects. As of March 2002, 17,951 ex-combatants had been integrated into various short-term reintegration projects. Implementing agencies have attempted to integrate

ex-combatant reintegration programming with that targeted toward civilians. A special program of assistance was directed toward mid-level field commanders of the armed groups in order to provide an incentive for them to maintain support for the DDR process.

Socio-economic recovery was given a large boost as DDR programming increased during 2001. DDR-related assistance included the extension to ex-combatants and their dependents of micro-credit, and programs of training in agriculture, vocational skills, and small enterprise development. Some began to work on public works projects; a few were able to enter into programs of formal education. As of March 2002, 17,951 ex-combatants had been integrated into various short-term reintegration projects. Implementing agencies have attempted to integrate ex-combatant reintegration programming with that targeted toward civilians. A special program of assistance was directed toward mid-level field commanders of former armed groups in order to provide an incentive for them to maintain support for the DDR process.

An on-going challenge for the government and UNAMSIL has been to ensure that adequate resources are available for reintegration and resettlement of IDPs, returning refugees, and ex-combatants. The Sierra Leone Consolidated U.N. Appeal for 2001 remained underfunded, at about 40%, by mid-year. In early February 2002, a donor conference was held to consider funding of the Consolidated U.N. Appeal for 2002 and to mobilize funds for additional resettlement and reintegration activities. In late March 2002, the United States contributed \$1.9 million to fund ex-combatant reinsertion payments. Other U.S. funding supports related efforts, such as the USAID Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace programs in Sierra Leone. The World Food Program (WFP) warned in early March 2002 that its regional emergency programs in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone would run out of food by June unless new pledges for humanitarian aid were received. According to a March 2002 U.N. report, the government-managed reintegration program lacks \$13.48 million for budgeted 2002 activities.

In mid-2001, the government established a National Recovery Committee (NRC) to coordinate the re-establishment of state authority and to plan for humanitarian assistance projects and rehabilitation of physical infrastructure and government services. The NRC coordinates the delivery of rebuilding resources and the roles in rehabilitation activities of donor governments, the Sierra Leone government, U.N. agencies, and non-governmental organizations. In late 2001, the NRC began a nationwide assessment in key districts. By March 2002 it had formulated country-wide district recovery plans and a national interim recovery strategy focused on transitioning from relief activities to socio-economic recovery. Many projects for rehabilitating health, education, and local administration structures and providing productive skills and human rights training were on-going in early 2002. Increasing security, freedom of movement, resettlement, and an increase in donor-financed imports allowed commerce, agricultural production, and other economic activity to increase considerably, according to the U.N.

Key goals relating to the extension of state authority include the return of recognized paramount chiefs and local officials, police deployment, and the opening of schools and local courts. As the restoration of civil administration and public

services proceeds, the government is facing significant capacity and resource limitations caused by physical infrastructure destruction, and lack of trained staff, accommodation, administrative and communications equipment, and transport facilities. These deficiencies seriously impeded the work of returning officials. Despite many constraints, recovery appears to be progressing well. By mid-March 2002, paramount chiefs and their officials had returned to all districts, apart from the eastern district of Kailahun, a diamond-rich, RUF stronghold.

Police Deployment, Reintegration, and Dispute Resolution. Particular attention is being given to the nationwide deployment of civilian police. Police had been deployed to all districts, though often in small numbers. Related activities include the training of new police recruits, general instruction in investigatory techniques, human rights law, and construction or rehabilitation of police stations. Assistance and technical advice is being provided by UNAMSIL Civilian Police (CIVPOL) and other advisers. Special police training related to the May 2002 election, focusing on security for voter registration, public campaigning, vote casting and counting, and the installation of elected candidates, was being provided. Dispute resolution is another focal point of civil administration reestablishment. Housing committees are being set up in many districts to settle disputes related to the illegal wartime occupation of homes and land, a major source of communal tension that has interfered with community rebuilding. Similar committees and meetings between former RUF members and local chiefs are being held to resolve disputes over property ownership, collection of market fees, and the disposition of RUF-appointed caretaker chiefs.

Diamonds. Diamonds were a key source of corruption and conflict in Sierra Leone, both during and prior to the war. The regulation of diamond mining is therefore a sensitive issue related to the restoration of authority. The government has begun implementing a new policy to control artisanal diamond mining. District mining committees, with local community participation, are issuing mining permits and, in coordination with police, attempting to control the movement of people in and to diamond-rich districts. The state is also examining diamond sector production and marketing reform proposals aimed at providing a more effective regulatory regime in order to ensure long-term economic and political stability; the proposals are based on a January 2002 report funded by the British Department for International Development. The new regime is expected to supplement a U.N. Security Council-mandated Sierra Leone government diamond export certification program.

Economy

Sierra Leone has significant mineral resources and agricultural potential, but the country's economy – which was underdeveloped and beset by corruption before the start of the civil conflict – contracted dramatically during the war, which destroyed much its physical and institutional infrastructure. The mainstays of the economy are agriculture and mining, which contributed an average of about 47% and 14%, respectively, of yearly gross domestic product (GDP) during the 1990s.

Industrial mining of bauxite and rutile (titanium dioxide, used in paint pigments) largely came to a halt after the mid-1990s. Diamond mining is primarily an artisanal activity, and such production continued during the war, but the small industrial diamond mining industry ceased to operate. Mining and industry together contributed

an average of 23.5% of GDP in the 1990s, while services made up about 25% of GDP in the same period. The government has begun negotiations with mining concession licensees to reinstate the industrial mining of underground diamond deposits. Diamond exports and resulting state revenues have increased under the U.N. Security Council-mandated government certificate of origin scheme. It ensures that Sierra Leonean diamond exports are not funding rebel groups and have been exported according to government taxation and export regulations.

About two thirds of Sierra Leone's people are subsistence farmers and small-scale traders, but food production and commerce have been severely disrupted due to widespread insecurity. Very limited production of cocoa and coffee took place in the 1990s. Per capita incomes plummeted during the last two decades. This decline was marginally ameliorated by fluctuating foreign aid, but high inflation and shortages of basic consumer goods and of foreign exchange plagued the economy in the 1990s. Sierra Leone has routinely ranked at the bottom of the UNDP Human Development Index.

**Table 1. Gross National Income and Foreign Aid Per Capita:
Recent Trends**
(in dollars)

Year	1980*	1990*	1995	1997	1998	1999	2000
GNI per capita	363	190	180	160	150	130	130
Aid per capita (current US\$)	—	15.71	45.7	25	22	15	—

Sources: World Bank, *World Development Indicators* database, 2001; Government of Sierra Leone, *Country Presentation for Sierra Leone*, Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, May 2001.

*1980 and 1990 figures based on Gross Domestic Product, not GNI.

According to the government, key factors that caused economic decline in the 1990s included “poor governance; inappropriate social and economic policies; and weak international prices for the country’s main exports”; the latter include diamonds, rutile, bauxite, cocoa, coffee, and fish.⁴¹ Other factors included low levels of education and of technology use and availability, lack of skilled labor, low and declining productivity, a small manufacturing sector and domestic market, gender discrimination, and a high population growth rate. Inflation and economic growth figures have recently improved.

⁴¹ Government of Sierra Leone, *Country Presentation for Sierra Leone*, Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, May 2001.

Table 2. Inflation and Gross Domestic Product: Recent Trends
(In annual percentiles* and millions of current dollars**)

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
GDP growth rate*	5	-18	-1	-8	3.8	5.4 (est.)
Inflation*	26	17	27	34.1	10	3
GDP**	941.7	850.2	672.4	669.4	654	—

Sources: World Bank, *World Development Indicators*; Government of Sierra Leone, *Country Presentation*; World Bank, "World Bank and IMF Support US\$950 million In Debt Service Relief For Sierra Leone Under Enhanced HIPC Initiative," March 19, 2002.

Economic Policy. Sierra Leone adopted a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in 1990. It sought to liberalize trade and the exchange of hard currency; deregulate prices and eliminate subsidies, notably on food and fuel; reform and strengthen institutional policy and regulatory capacities, and fiscal management; streamline the civil service; and divest state-owned firms. The conflict undermined implementation of the SAP goals significantly. Following the official end of the conflict, the government stated that it will seek to implement a similar policy agenda, albeit in the context of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).⁴² Several SAP project loans remain active. Many aspects of Sierra Leone's SAP goals were achieved, according to the government. These included a gradual decrease in the growth rate of inflation, a decline in state budget deficits, wider availability of rice and fuel, and improvements in fiscal management. The government, however, asserts that liberalization of the import sector led to job losses, as did civil service retrenchments. According to the World Bank, Sierra Leone has

made strong structural reforms in recent years, including tax policy and administration reforms that support private sector redevelopment and fiscal stability, improved public expenditure management and control, exchange and trade liberalization to strengthen competitiveness, financial sector modernization and regulatory reforms, improvements in governance, and more effective delivery of social services.⁴³

In October 2001, Paris Club creditors extended external debt relief to Sierra Leone on Naples terms, reducing its debt to Club members from \$180 million to \$45

⁴²PRSPs reflect a policy approach advocated by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) that has largely replaced the SAP model. SAPs had been criticized as creating interim economic adjustments that negatively affected the poor and created other negative interim outcomes. See World Bank, *Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers*, [<http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/strategies/>].

⁴³World Bank, "World Bank and IMF Support US\$950 million in Debt Service Relief for Sierra Leone Under Enhanced HIPC Initiative," March 19, 2002.

million.⁴⁴ In September 2001, the IMF approved in principle \$164 million in credits for the government's 2001-2004 economic program under the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF), of which Sierra Leone had drawn about \$59 million by March 2002. After a review of the government's PRGF performance, the IMF on March 12, 2002 announced the additional release of about \$12 million in credits.⁴⁵ On March 19, 2002, the World Bank International Development Association and the IMF announced a \$950 million comprehensive debt reduction package for Sierra Leone under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. At the end of 2000, the net present value of Sierra Leone external debt had been equal to 707% of GDP, and external debt service represented 48% of the value of exports and about 70% of state revenues.⁴⁶ The two institutions will provide some debt-service relief immediately, but the full program of assistance is conditioned upon Sierra Leone's implementation of a range of policy measures related to transparency, accountability, and poverty reduction and other goals contained in the country's Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) and in other policy agreements. Assistance from other creditors will begin after these goals are met.⁴⁷

U.S. Policy

Overview

U.S. policy toward the Sierra Leone conflict appears to have been influenced, on the one hand, by a reluctance to become directly involved in a country where few key U.S. economic or strategic interests are at stake and, on the other, by American humanitarian concerns, support for conflict resolution and democracy-building, the observation of human rights, and the maintenance of regional stability. Some have argued that Sierra Leone, along with many other parts of the developing world, is

⁴⁴The Paris Club is an informal group of creditor governments that meet to reach consensus-based common positions on the extension of debt relief to highly indebted countries. "Naples terms," named after the 1995 G-7 summit in Naples, Italy, allow for the reduction of a maximum of 67% of eligible countries' official debt, including previously rescheduled concessional debt. Naples terms allow a reduction in overall debt stock; a reduction of interest rates; or the increased repayment periods. See Jon Schaffer, "Debt Relief for the Poorest Nations: A New Framework," *Economic Perspectives*, U.S. Information Agency, 1: 11, August 1996, *inter alia*.

⁴⁵IMF, IMF Approves In Principle US\$169 Million Three-Year PRGF Arrangement for Sierra Leone, September 20, 2001; IMF, IMF Completes Review Under Sierra Leone's PRGF Arrangement and Approves US\$12 Million Disbursement, March 12, 2002.

⁴⁶U.N. Security Council, "Eleventh report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, S/2001/857, September 7, 2001.

⁴⁷World Bank, "World Bank and IMF Support US\$950..." On debt reduction, HIPC, and development, see CRS Report RL30449, "Debt and Developing in Poor Countries: Rethinking Policy Responses"; CRS Report RL30214, "Debt Reduction: Initiatives for the Most Heavily Indebted Poor Countries; World Bank, *HIPC*, [<http://www.worldbank.org/hipc/>]; and IMF, *Debt Relief Under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative*, [<http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/hipc.htm>].

more closely tied to U.S. security interests than many policy analysts believed was the case prior to the terrorist attacks of September 11. They point to anecdotal evidence that ties illicit trading in Sierra Leonean “conflict diamonds” to the funding of terrorist groups such as the Al Qaeda network and Hamas.⁴⁸

Bush Administration. In a December 2001 statement to the U.N. Security Council, U.S. Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations James B. Cunningham described U.S. policy in West Africa as being based on three principles:

support for governments in the region that pursue policies of non-aggression externally and good governance internally; support for action in the Security Council to deter and contain those regimes in West Africa which engage in aggression against their neighbors and oppress their own peoples; and assistance and support to strengthen regional organizations, such as ECOWAS, that aim to reduce trade barriers, combat transnational threats and resolve conflicts.⁴⁹

Bush Administration policy toward Sierra Leone appears to emphasize broad continuity with previous U.S. policy toward that country, particularly on policies to stem the flow of conflict diamonds, to halt alleged assistance by the Liberian government to the RUF, to promote regional stability, and to provide humanitarian and economic growth assistance. The United States has pursued these goals through policy actions that it has advocated in the U.N. Security Council and through bilateral assistance and indirect economic support through the World Bank and IMF.

In a January 25, 2001 statement to the U.N. Security Council during a review of the December 2000 *Panel of Experts Report on Sierra Leone Diamonds and Arms*, Ambassador Cunningham (then Acting U.S. Representative to the U.N.) expressed Bush Administration support for U.N. efforts to halt the flow of conflict diamonds and illicit arms, which he said were essential in ending the fighting and destabilization in Sierra Leone and its neighbors. He also expressed support for ECOWAS efforts to end the conflict.⁵⁰

In March 2001, the Bush Administration sponsored U.N. Security Council Resolution 1343, which demands that Liberia end its support for the RUF and expel all RUF members from its territory; the resolution also bans the export of diamonds from Liberia and the travel of top Liberian officials outside of Liberia, among other measures. In response to the passage of Resolution 1343, President Bush issued Executive Order 13213 on May 22, 2001. It further enhances U.S. prohibitions on the importation into the United States of rough diamonds from Liberia, as required by

⁴⁸See, for instance, testimony at a February 13, 2002 hearing entitled “Illicit Diamonds, Conflict and Terrorism: The Role of U.S. Agencies in Fighting the Conflict Diamond Trade,” held by the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, Restructuring, and the District of Columbia on [http://www.senate.gov/~gov_affairs/021302witness.htm].

⁴⁹USUN Press Release # 194 (01), December 18, 2001.

⁵⁰See USUN Press Release # 11 (01), January 25, 2001; and Judy Aita, “U.S. Pressing for Sanctions Against Liberia for Aid to RUF (Illicit diamond trade fuels Sierra Leone conflict, report says),” *Washington File*, January 25, 2001.

Executive Order 13194, issued in January 2001 by then-president Clinton. The Bush Administration is also pursuing a variety of other efforts to halt the international trade in conflict diamonds. The Administration has also maintained U.S. assistance to Sierra Leone in support of humanitarian welfare, institutional reform and rebuilding, and the strengthening of democratic processes, and has supported the peacekeeping mission of UNAMSIL, in part through Operation Focus Relief (see below).

Also in March 2001, the United States expressed concern over the regionally-destabilizing violence in southern Guinea, a zone where Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone converge. Ambassador Cunningham attributed this violence to the RUF, assisted by the Liberian government. He urged the U.N. High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to evacuate refugees and IDPs from the volatile border zone and expressed U.S. opposition to the creation of “safe corridors” for refugees through RUF-held territory or to the repatriation of refugees to Sierra Leone, pending the establishment of a durable peace and a stable security environment in Sierra Leone. U.S. efforts to ameliorate the humanitarian disaster that followed the attacks included \$3.5 million in emergency funding to the UNHCR to support the relocation of refugees displaced from camps in the affected border areas and \$1.25 million in World Food Program funding for assistance related to the crisis, in addition to \$54 million in U.S. support for the UNHCR’s Global Appeal for Africa.⁵¹

On May 14, 2001, Ambassador Cunningham told the Security Council that the United States hoped to “see results on the ground – practical concrete results – in areas of humanitarian assistance and human rights” and re-emphasized U.S. support for the regional conflict resolution efforts of ECOWAS. He stated U.S. opposition to lifting sanctions on the Liberian government, which he said was attempting to play the role of “both arsonist and firefighter in Sierra Leone.” He said it was both supporting the RUF and fomenting regional instability while demanding the “protections and privileges” of a victim of aggression by armed opponents of the RUF and the Liberian government.⁵² In May and June 2001, the Ambassador expressed U.S. support for the strengthening of UNAMSIL, especially in relation to UNAMSIL efforts

to extend the authority of the Government of Sierra Leone throughout the national territory, conducting free and fair elections, and restoring to the people of Sierra Leone their mineral wealth, to which they’re entitled. These are all certainly critical to consolidate peace.⁵³

His June statement also reiterated U.S. support for establishing the Special Court for Sierra Leone and expressed U.S. regret that “this vital project has turned into an extremely complex, time-consuming, expensive and inconclusive affair.” He noted that although earlier reservations expressed by some donor countries over cost considerations were legitimate, changes in plans for the anticipated court had resulted in a “sustainable approach at a reasonable cost.” He noted, however, that such reservations had been influenced by what he implied was the high cost-to-conviction

⁵¹USUN Press Release # 35 (01), March 8, 2001.

⁵²USUN Press Release # 61 (01), May 14, 2001.

⁵³*Ibid.*; and USUN Press Release # 98 (01), June 28, 2001.

ratio of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, which he said provided examples of mistakes that the Sierra Leone court should avoid. He also stated that the court should begin its work by prosecuting former RUF leader Foday Sankoh. He said that such action would not be in conflict with the pursuit of peace in Sierra Leone, which “must go together” with the pursuit of justice. Some observers had cautioned that a prosecution of Sankoh might cause the RUF to again abandon the peace process. He also stated that while the United States remained concerned about a lack of resources for DDR and encouraged donor countries to fully fund DDR activities, the United States opposed the use of assessed funding for this purpose, asserting that “DDR is not, in the end, the responsibility of the Security Council.”⁵⁴ In late March 2002, the United States contributed \$1.9 million to the Trust Fund that will help fund reinsertion payments for ex-combatants and related reintegration programming.

In a December 2001 Security Council meeting on an October 2001 U.N. fact-finding mission West Africa, Ambassador Cunningham said that the United States supported an internationally supported “cross-border, regional approach” to ending conflict in the region, building democracy, and achieving socio-economic stability and growth. He said this included U.S. support for naming of a U.N. Special Representative for West Africa. He cautioned, however, that achieving such goals remained primarily the responsibility of states in the region, to which he attributed a decrease in tensions between Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, despite a recent deterioration of security in Lofa County and elsewhere in Liberia. He also warned that expanded U.N. initiatives in the region should not duplicate pre-existing U.N. efforts in the region. He also noted that key developments in the Sierra Leone peace process – the completion of DDR and the start of the election process – were under way.

The Ambassador also stated that the maintenance of U.N. sanctions on the government of President Taylor of Liberia was directly tied to the continued success of UNAMSIL’s peacekeeping operations. He accused the Liberian government of continuing to “provide sanctuary to armed rebels of the RUF, whose presence in Liberia is a threat to the peace in Sierra Leone and prospects for elections,” and of “violating this Council’s embargo on importation of arms and the ban on exports of diamonds.”⁵⁵ On February 7, 2002, Ambassador Sichan Siv, U.S. Representative on the U.N. Economic and Social Council, stated to the Security Council that “while we continue to support efforts to facilitate the return of Sierra Leonean refugees who have expressed a firm desire to repatriate, we recognize that for many the time is not yet right for repatriation.” He also noted continuing U.S. concern about ongoing instability in northern Liberia, which he said had caused the displacement of thousands of Liberians and several thousand Sierra Leonean refugees.⁵⁶

Clinton Administration. In 1999, Clinton Administration officials described the U.S. policy goals as supporting ECOMOG and the Kabbah government,

⁵⁴USUN Press Release # 98.

⁵⁵USUN Press Release # 194 (01), December 18, 2001.

⁵⁶USUN Press Release # 14 (02), February 7, 2002.

encouraging dialogue leading to a peaceful resolution of the conflict, ending outside support for the rebels, and providing humanitarian assistance. They maintained that these objectives complemented the U.S. national interest of promoting stability, democracy, and human rights in Africa. They noted that the Clinton Administration undertook active diplomatic efforts to effect a cease-fire, provided humanitarian assistance to civilians, and attempted to cut off RUF support from abroad by applying pressure on alleged “external actors” such as Liberia and Burkina Faso.⁵⁷ During the negotiations in Lomé, U.S. special envoy Jesse Jackson reportedly urged Sierra Leone’s President to agree to the terms of the accord.

In October 1999, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright made Sierra Leone the second stop of a six-nation tour of Africa. She met with President Kabbah and held separate talks with Foday Sankoh and Johnny Paul Koroma. An official who attended the closed meeting said that Albright admonished the two former rebel leaders that the world was “repulsed” by the atrocities their followers had committed and exhorted them to abide by the terms of the Lomé accord.⁵⁸ The Secretary also visited a refugee camp and spoke with civilian victims of violence. In a September 1999 speech, National Security Advisor Samuel Berger noted that the United States had provided more than \$100 million to ECOMOG over the past 10 years.⁵⁹ The Administration also listed Sierra Leone among countries to be considered for debt forgiveness, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture has extended export credit guarantees.

The Clinton Administration supported U.S. assistance to UNOMSIL and its successor, UNAMSIL. It also initiated Operation Focus Relief (OFR), a \$90 million U.S. military training program; President Clinton officially announced OFR during his August 2000 visit to Africa. OFR sought to provide equipment and light infantry training to a total of seven battalions from Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal, all members of the Economic Community of West African States, for deployment to Sierra Leone as part of UNAMSIL. The first two Nigerian battalions vetted and selected for military instruction graduated from the program in December 2000, and have been deployed to Sierra Leone. The program was conceived as a direct response to an ECOWAS offer of 3,000 troops to bolster UNAMSIL, for which ECOWAS requested troop equipping and deployment assistance, following the U.N. hostage crisis in May 2000. OFR is part of a broad U.S. strategy of building sub-regional

⁵⁷ Steven Mufson, “U.S. Backs Role for Rebels in W. Africa; Sierra Leone Amnesty Pushed,” *The Washington Post*, October 18, 1999, A13. At a September 15 press conference, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Susan Rice argued that, even though the United States deplored RUF’s “brutal tactics,” the accord was the best way to avoid further bloodshed.

⁵⁸ Karl Vick, “Sierra Leone’s Unjust peace; At Sobering Stop, Albright Defends Amnesty for Rebels,” *The Washington Post*, October 19, 1999, A12.

⁵⁹ Transcript of Remarks by Samuel Berger at Africare Dinner. *U.S. Newswire Corp.* September 28, 1999.

capacity for the conduct of peaceful operations.⁶⁰ The United States also expressed strong support for the British-sponsored retraining of the Sierra Leone Army.

Under the Clinton Administration, the Office of Transition Initiatives of the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) began a program of assistance for the Sierra Leone government. It aimed, in part, to develop a government diamond export certification system to halt the export of "conflict diamonds" produced by the RUF and increase state diamond revenues.⁶¹ The Clinton Administration supported passage by the U.N. Security Council of U.N. Resolution 1306, which imposed sanctions on the government of Liberia's Charles Taylor and was meant to curtail Liberian support of the RUF and halt the conflict diamond trade. In late January 2001, then-President Clinton issued Executive Order 13194, "Prohibiting the Importation of Rough Diamonds From Sierra Leone." The effect of the action was to implement U.N. Resolution 1306, prevent the RUF from profiting from the sale of diamonds in the United States, and support the legitimate trade in diamonds. The executive order augmented an October 2000 Clinton proclamation that denied entry into the United States of persons who assist or profit from the armed activities of the RUF. The restrictions apply to President Charles Taylor, senior members of the Liberian government, and their supporters and families. It was intended to explicitly sanction the Liberian government for its failure to end its trafficking in arms and illicit diamonds with the RUF.

Congressional Role

Congress has closely monitored the Sierra Leone conflict and related events. In 1998, the House held hearings on Sierra Leone, and both House and Senate passed resolutions condemning human rights abuses in the country. Resolutions (H.Res. 62, S.Res. 54) expressing concern over continuing efforts to overthrow Sierra Leone's elected government were approved by both chambers in the 106th Congress, and, in a January 1999 letter to President Clinton, a bipartisan group of seven legislators urged more active U.S. involvement in resolving the crisis. On March 23, 1999, the House International Relations Committee held additional hearings to review the situation in Sierra Leone.⁶² On October 11, 2000, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's Subcommittee on African Affairs held a hearing entitled "United States Policy in Sierra Leone," during which Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Susan Rice assessed the conflict, reviewed U.S. policy goals and accomplishments. She examined on-going U.S. strategies to support the elected democratic government of Sierra Leone, curtail the ability of the RUF to wage war, and promote

⁶⁰See Jim Fisher-Thompson, "U.S. Aid to West African Force for Sierra Leone on Track." *Washington File*, International Information Programs, Department of State, March 27, 2001; and "Operation Focus Relief: West African Train and Equip Program and Support to the Sierra Leone Army [sic] Funding to Date." Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense." March 9, 2001, *inter alia*.

⁶¹OTI Sierra Leone activities: [http://www.usaid.gov/hum_response/oti/country/slone/].

⁶²U.S. Congress, House of Representatives. Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Africa, *Sierra Leone: Prospects for Peace and Stability*, Hearing, 106th Congress, 1st session, Serial no. 106-26, March 23, 1999.

accountability for human rights abuses and other crimes against humanity⁶³. The 106th Congress also held several Sierra-Leone-focused hearings on the topic of conflict diamonds. The Subcommittee on Africa of the House Committee on International Relations held a May 9, 2000 hearing entitled “Africa’s Diamonds: Precious, Perilous Too?” On September 13, 2000, the Trade Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee held a hearing entitled “Trade in African Diamonds,” during which subcommittee members highlighted several key concerns relating to possible commerce-related legislation on conflict diamonds.

107th Congress. During the 107th Congress, two Sierra-Leone-related hearings have been held. On July 11, 2001, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations held a nomination hearing for the Bush Administration’s Ambassador-designate for Sierra Leone, Peter R. Chaveas. On July 12, 2001, the Subcommittee on Africa of the House Committee on International Relations held a hearing entitled “African Crisis Response Initiative: A Security Building Block,” which, in part, addressed Operation Focus Relief in the context of a Bush Administration policy review of a related peacekeeping training program started under the Clinton Administration, the African Crisis Response Initiative.⁶⁴ Several conflict diamond-related hearings have been held, and a number of related bills introduced.⁶⁵

Section 776 of S. 1401 (Biden), introduced September 4, 2001, would authorize appropriations of \$5 million FY2002 and in FY2003, respectively, in the form of U.S. voluntary contributions to assist the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The measure expresses the sense of Congress that individuals most responsible for war crimes committed in Sierra Leone should be held accountable for their actions, regardless of where those individuals may reside, and that the United States should support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Sierra Leone, including through assistance in the collection of relevant human rights data. It also proposes that Congress consider funding rewards to be paid to individuals furnishing information relating to the indictment of persons subject to prosecution for serious violations of international humanitarian law in Sierra Leone. The measure was placed on the Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders, Calendar number 149.

U.S. Assistance to Sierra Leone

According to the U.S. Agency for International Development’s (USAID) the U.S. government had, as of April 2001, provided over \$300 million in humanitarian assistance to Sierra Leone since the beginning of the conflict over a decade ago. U.S. government agencies implementing assistance programs include USAID’s Office of

⁶³U.S. Congress, United States Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on African Affairs, *United States Policy In Sierra Leone*, Hearing , 106th Congress, 2nd session, S. Hrg. 106-882, October 11, 2000.

⁶⁴See “African Crisis Response Initiative: A Security Building Block.” July 12, 2001. [http://www.house.gov/international_relations/af071201.htm].

⁶⁵See CRS Electronic Briefing Book, *Trade* entry “Conflict and Trade in Diamonds,” [<http://www.congress.gov/brbk/html/ebtra123.html>]; and CRS Report RL30751, *Diamonds and Conflict: Policy Proposals and Background*.

U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA); Office of Food for Peace (FFP); the Africa Bureau (AFR); the State Department's Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM); and the Foreign Agricultural Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (FAS/USDA). USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) plans to exit Sierra Leone in March 2002; the USAID Africa Bureau mission in Conakry, Guinea will take responsibility for remaining program activities.

In FY2000, State/PRM provided \$7 million in FY2000 to several international organizations in support of refugee repatriation and reintegration, health care, education, and gender based violence programs in Sierra Leone, and \$10.8 million for Sierra Leonean refugee programs in Guinea and Liberia. In FY2001, State/PRM provided \$22.2 million for Sierra Leonean refugee programming in such areas as agriculture, education, health, nutrition, refugee relocation and repatriation through a variety of U.N. and other international organizations and non-governmental organizations. As of mid-January 2002, State/PRM had provided \$7.9 million in funding for similar programming and anticipated obligating a total for FY2002 similar to that spent in FY2001. Total U.S. government funding for humanitarian assistance for in FY2000 amounted to \$48.9 million, and \$75.15 million for FY2001; of mid-January 2002, it totaled \$21 million for FY2002.⁶⁶ Operation Focus Relief costs, as of mid-May 2001, totaled about \$87.35 million. The Administration's FY2003 USAID request totals \$3.87 million.

Table 3. U.S. Assistance to Sierra Leone
(Actual obligations unless noted, \$ millions; figures are rounded)

Agency	FY2000	FY2001	FY2002 (Estimated)	FY2003 (Request)
USAID/OFDA	11.8	11.8	N.A.	N.A.
USAID/FFP	23.8	33.4	17.6 (as of 1/14/02)	N.A.
USAID/OTI	3.28 ^a	3.6	N.A.	N.A.
USAID/AFR	2.9	3.89	3.48	3.87
State Dept./PRM	7.09	10.47	N.A.	N.A.
USDA Section 416(b) Food	N.A.	11.86	N.A.	N.A.
Total	49.9	75.02	17.6	3.87

Source: USAID/OFDA, "Mano River Countries (Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone)-Complex Emergency Situation Report #2 (FY2002)," January 14, 2002; and USAID/OFDA, "Sierra Leone-Complex Emergency Situation Report #1(FY2001)," April 20, 2001.

a. Does not include \$950,000 in Development Fund for Africa programing implemented by OTI on behalf of USAID/AFR.

⁶⁶See OFDA, "Mano River Countries (Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone) - Complex Emergency Situation Report #2 (FY2002)," Bureau for Humanitarian Response-USAID, January 14, 2002; and OFDA, "Sierra Leone - Complex Emergency Situation Report #1(FY2001)," Bureau For Humanitarian Response-USAID, April 20, 2001; and USAID *Budget Justification to the Congress, Annex I Africa*.

Table 4. U.S. Assistance: Agency Programming Sectors

Agency	Programing Sectors
USAID/OFDA	Agriculture; health; nutrition; shelter and resettlement; water/sanitation; transport assistance.
USAID/FFP	Emergency food assistance to vulnerable groups.
USAID/OTI	Civil society strengthening; ex-combatant education and training; policy development support on problem of "conflict diamonds"; electoral process support
USAID/AFR	Social reintegration, reconciliation, and human rights education; electoral and related political processes support. Aids Leahy War Victims Fund and the Displaced Children's and Orphan's Fund.
State/PRM	Refugee repatriation and reintegration; health care; education; and assistance to victims of gender based violence.
FAS/USDA	Administers Public Law 480 (P.L. 480) Title II Food for Peace and Section 416(b) (excess commodities) Programs

Table 5. UNAMSIL: U.S. Contributions, FY2000, FY2001 and FY2002
(\$ millions)

FY2000 (Actual)	FY2001 (Actual)	FY2002 (Appropriation)	FY2003 (Request)
128.08	145	318	145.8

Source: State Department, "Summary: Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities," February 19, 2002; and State Department, "Account Tables-Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities," FY2003 International Affairs (Function 150) Budget Request, Summary and Highlights of Accounts by Appropriations Subcommittees, February 4, 2002.

Table 6. Timetable for Parliamentary and Presidential Elections: May 2002

2001	Event
Nov 30	NEC Staff Vacancies Filled
Nov 30	All Districts Disarmed According to UNAMSIL
Nov 30	District Block Representation System Approved by Parliament
Nov 12-Dec 15	Identify Registration Centers (5,400) & Photo Centers (600)
Dec 1-31	Recruitment of Registration Centre Staff (11,000)
2002	Event
Jan 3-4	Training of Trainers
Jan 5-6	Training of Registration Officers and Camera Trainers

Jan 16-17	Training of Assistant Registrars/ Laminators
Jan 18	Training of Assistant Registrars/ Laminators
Jan 20-23	Deployment of 11,000 Registration Staff
Jan 24-Feb 7	Voter Registration (Including Refugees and IDPs) *Registration extended by 3 days.
Feb 8-27	Compilation of Provisional Voters' Register Transport, scan forms & print 5400 voters' registers
Feb 28-March 2	Distribute Provisional Voters' Register to Exhibition Centers
March 3-7	Exhibition of Provisional Voters' Register
March 3-7	Filing Objections to Provisional Voter's Register
March 8	Publish Hearing Dates for Registering Objections
March 13-17	Conduct Hearings on Objections
March 18-21	Update Provisional Voters' Register
March 22-April 1	Printing of Final Voters, Register
April 1	Nomination of Candidates
April 9– May 5	Printing of Ballot Papers
April 10– May 6	Train Polling Station Staff
May 2	Publish Polling Stations List
May 5	Paramount Chief Parliamentary Elections
May 6 – 13	Deliver Elections Materials to Polling Stations
May 8 or 10	Special Voting
May 14	Election Day (Parliamentary & Presidential) *If necessary, a run-off presidential election will follow.

Sources: CIA, "Sierra Leone," *World Factbook 2001*; Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Sierra Leone," *Parline Database*; and news accounts.

Table 7. Sierra Leone's Political Parties and Leaders

Party	Party Leader	1996 Poll (% by party)	Seats in Parliament
All People's Congress (APC)	Alhaji Sat Koroma, interim chairman.	5.66	5
Citizens United for Peace and Progress (CUPP)	Alfred Musa Conteh, interim chairman.	–	–
Coalition for Progress Party (CPP)	Jeridine William-Sarho, interim leader.	–	–
Democratic Center Party (DCP)	Adu Aiah Koroma.	4.75	3
Democratic Labour Party (DLP)	George E. L. Palmer.	–	

Democratic Party (DP)	Henry Balo, acting chairman.	–	–
Grand Alliance Party (GAP)	Dr. Raymond Kamara		
Movement for Progress (MOP)	Zainab Bangura	–	–
National Alliance Democratic Party (NADP)	Mohamed Yahya Sillah, chairman.	–	–
National Democratic Alliance (NDA)	Amadu M. B. Jalloh, leader.	–	–
National People's Party (NPP)	Andrew Turay.	–	–
National Republican Party (NRP)	Stephen Sahr Mambu.	–	–
National Unity Movement (NUM)	Sam Leigh, interim chairman.	–	–
National Unity Party (NUP)	John Benjamine, interim leader.	5.23	4
Peace and Liberation Party (PLP)	Darlington Morrison, interim chairman.	–	–
People's Democratic Alliance (PDA)	Cpl. (Rtd) Abdul Rahman Kamara, interim chairman.	–	–
People's Democratic Party (PDP)	Osman Kamara. 15.24	12	
People's National Convention (PNC)	Edward John Kargbo.	–	–
People's Progressive Party (PPP)	Abass Chernok Bundu, chairman.	–	–
Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFP)	Foday Saybana Sankoh, chairman.	–	–
Social Democratic Party (SDP)	Andrew Victor Lungay.	–	–
Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP)	Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, chairman.	35.94	27
United National People's Party (UNPP)	John Karefa-Smart in exile; Raymond Kamara, acting leader.	22	17
Young People's Party (YPP)	Sylvia Olavinka Blyden	–	–

Sources: CIA, "Sierra Leone," *World Factbook 2001*; Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Sierra Leone," *Parline Database*; and news accounts. As of April 2002, fourteen parties had registered in order to contest the May 2002 election.

Appendix: Acronyms Used in This Report

AFR:	Africa Bureau, agency of USAID.
AFRC:	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council.
CDF:	Civilian Defense Forces; pro-government alliance of civil militias in Sierra Leone
DDR:	Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration; also DDRR (disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and resettlement).
ECOMOG:	ECOWAS Monitoring Group; a regional peacekeeping force.
ECOWAS:	Economic Community of West African States.
FAS:	Foreign Agricultural Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture agency.
FFP:	Office of Food for Peace, agency of USAID.
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product.
GNI:	Gross National Income (similar to GNP).
GNP:	Gross National Product.
ICTR:	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.
NPFL:	National Patriotic Front of Liberia; former rebel faction of President Charles Taylor of Liberia.
OFDA:	Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, agency of USAID.
OFR:	Operation Focus Relief.
OTI:	Office of Transition Initiatives, agency of USAID.
PRM:	Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration; State Department agency.
RUF:	Revolutionary United Front, rebel group in Sierra Leone.
SLA:	Sierra Leone Army; as of April 1, 2002 renamed the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces.
UNAMSIL:	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone.
UNOMSIL:	United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone.
USAID:	U.S. Agency for International Development.
USDA:	U.S. Department of Agriculture USDA.

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